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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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Mahabharata-24

THE TWELFTH YEAR

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

Amar Chitra Katha
No. 375, February 15, 1987

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Veda Vyasa's Epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya—great grandson of Vyasa—and the many learned sages who had assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The twenty-third session of our rendering of the Mahabharata described how Duryodhana, wanting to cause further humiliation to the Pandavas, went with his retinue to the Dwaitavana, where the heroes were in exile. There, however, he encountered the hostile army of the Gandharvas and was captured by their king. Eventually he had to be freed by the Pandavas. The man who had gone on an expedition to cause humiliation to the Pandavas felt himself humiliated since he had to be rescued by them. Unable to bear it he decided to spend the rest of his days in performing penance. But he was finally persuaded to return to Hastinapura where he performed the Vaishnava Yajna.

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THE PANDAVAS AT VIRATA'S PALACE

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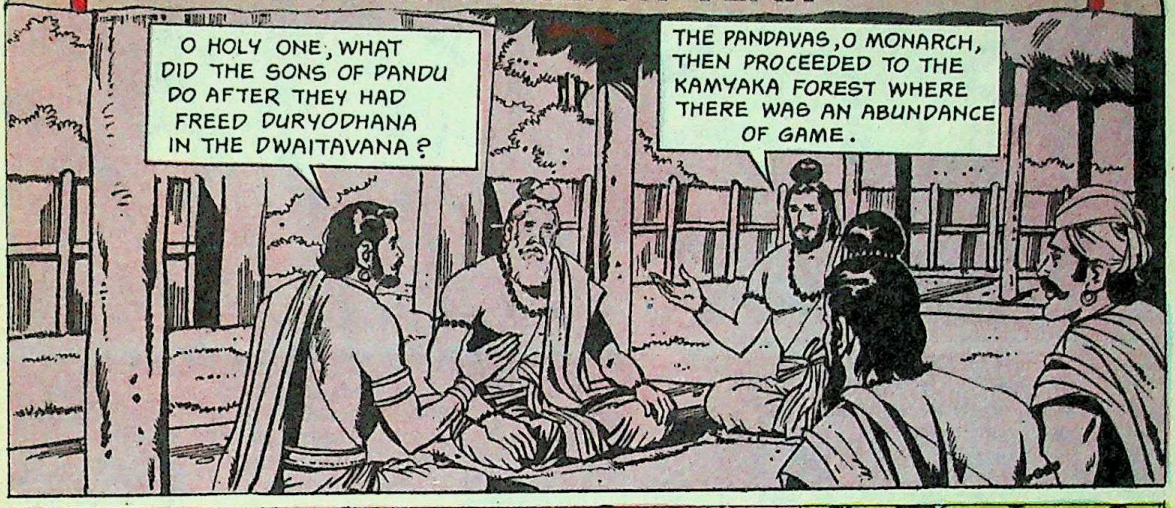
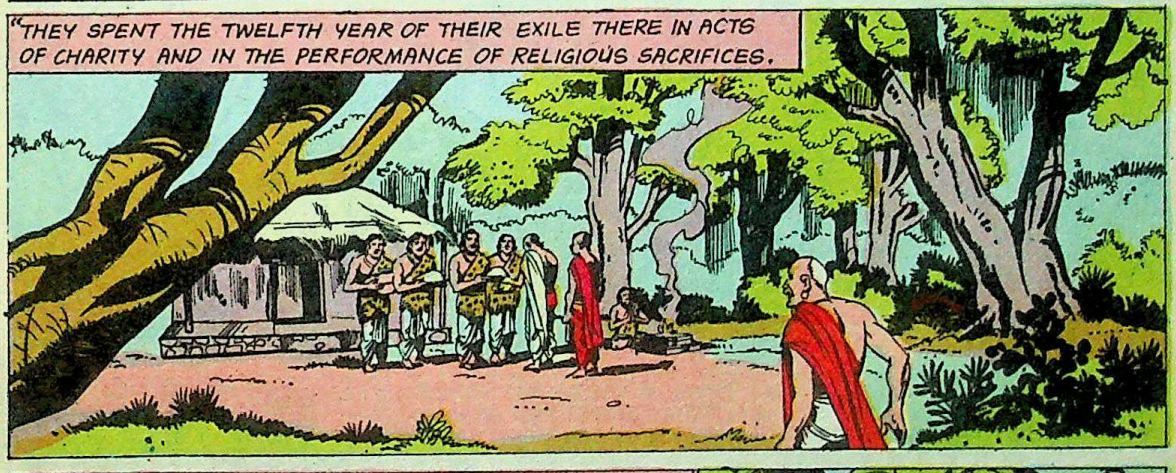
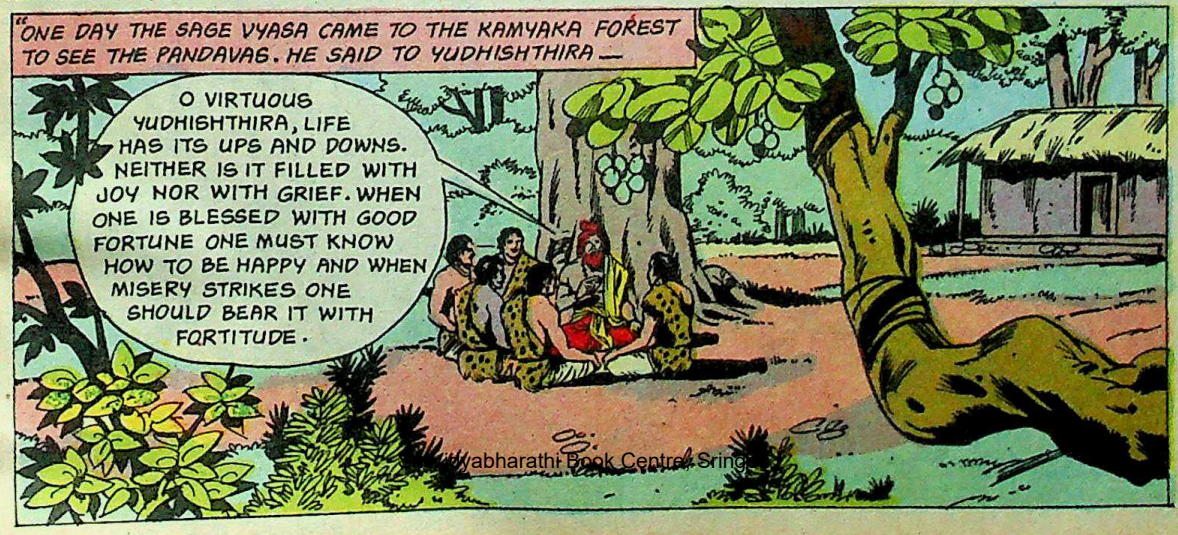
Mahabharata-24

THE TWELFTH YEAR







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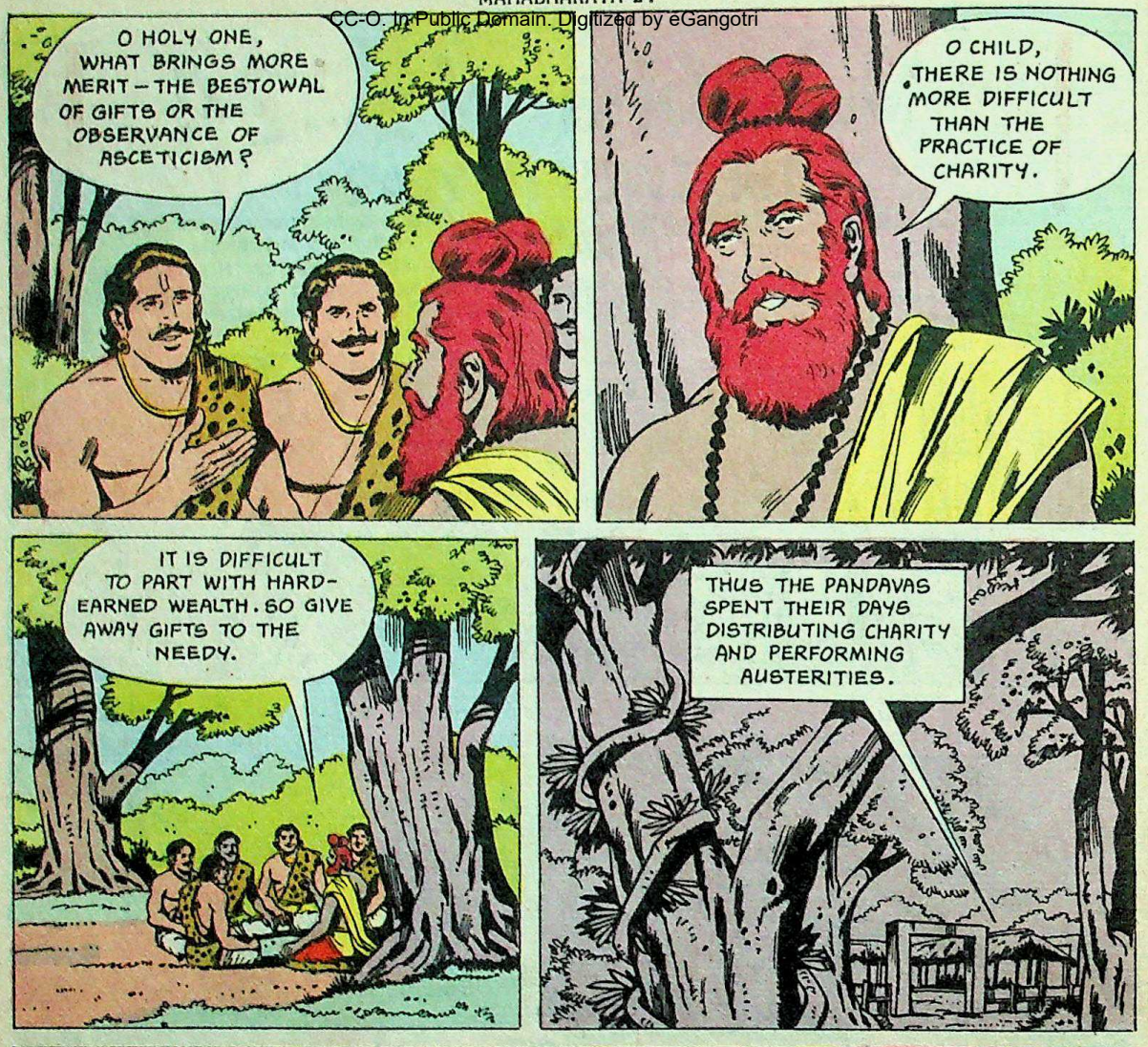

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* SEE ACK – 19 (PLATE)
** THE FOOD FROM THIS THALI WAS INEXHAUSTIBLE AT EACH MEAL TILL DRAUPADI HAD EATEN.

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"BUT THE PANDAVAS BEING HAPPY IN EXILE, FURTHER FILLED DURYODHANA WITH ENVY.

DURVASA, THE ILL TEMPERED SAGE, WILL SOON BE HERE. I COULD TURN HIM AGAINST THE PANDAVAS.

"AS EXPECTED, DURVASA CAME ONE DAY WITH HUNDREDS OF HIS FOLLOWERS TO HASTINAPURA.

"DURYODHANA RECEIVED HIM COURTEOUSLY AND LOOKED AFTER HIS EVERY NEED.

GIVE ME SOME FOOD QUICKLY.

"DURYODHANA FED THE SAGE AND HIS FOLLOWERS. PLEASED WITH HIS LAVISH HOSPITALITY, DURVASA SAID —

O KING, I WISH TO GRANT YOU A BOON.

"DURYODHANA SAID —

THE GREAT KING YUDHISHTHIRA IS NOW LIVING IN THE FOREST. O SAGE, GO WITH YOUR DISCIPLES AND SEEK HIS HOSPITALITY. BUT GO AFTER DRAUPADI HAS FINISHED HER MEAL.

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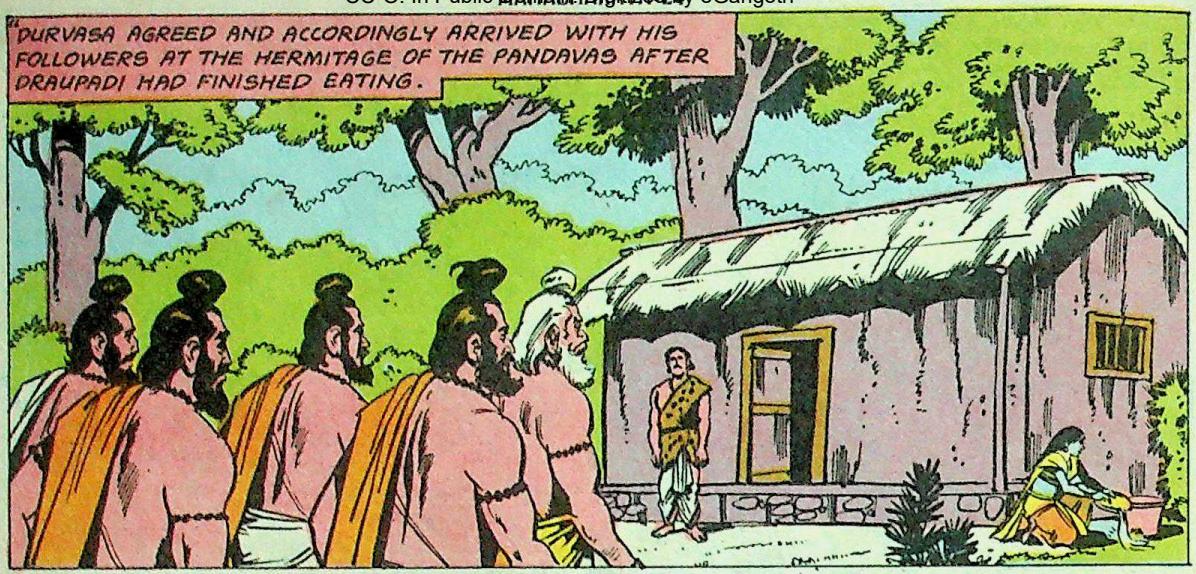

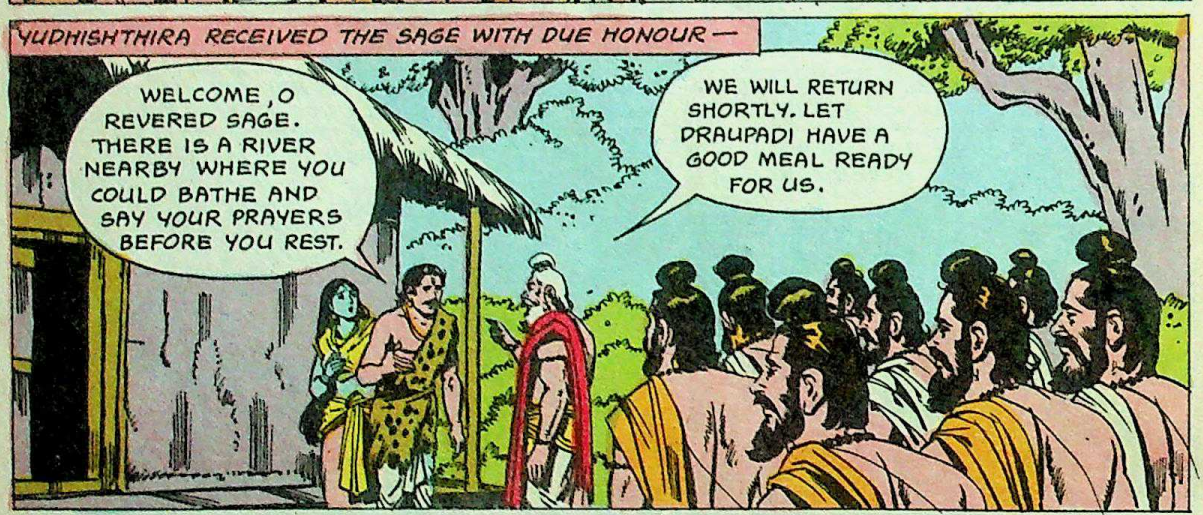

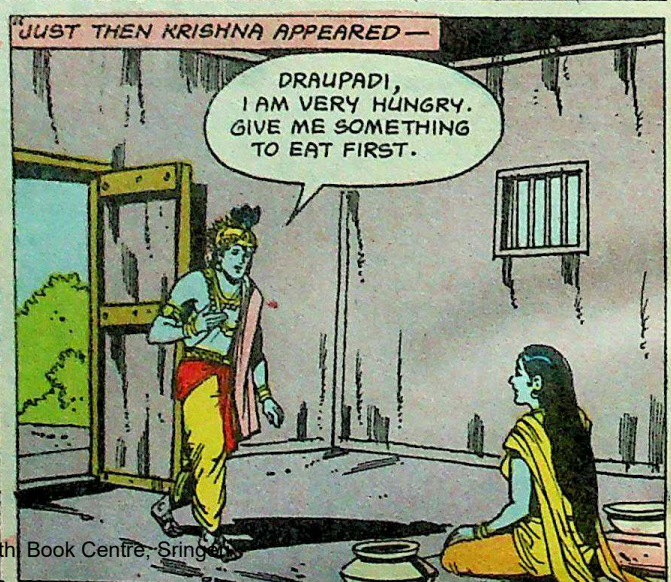

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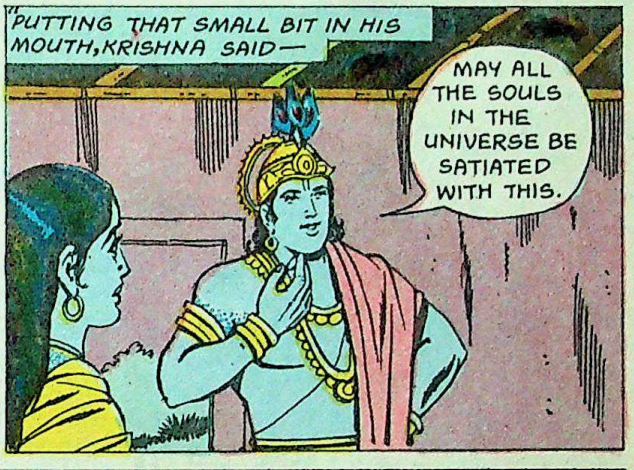

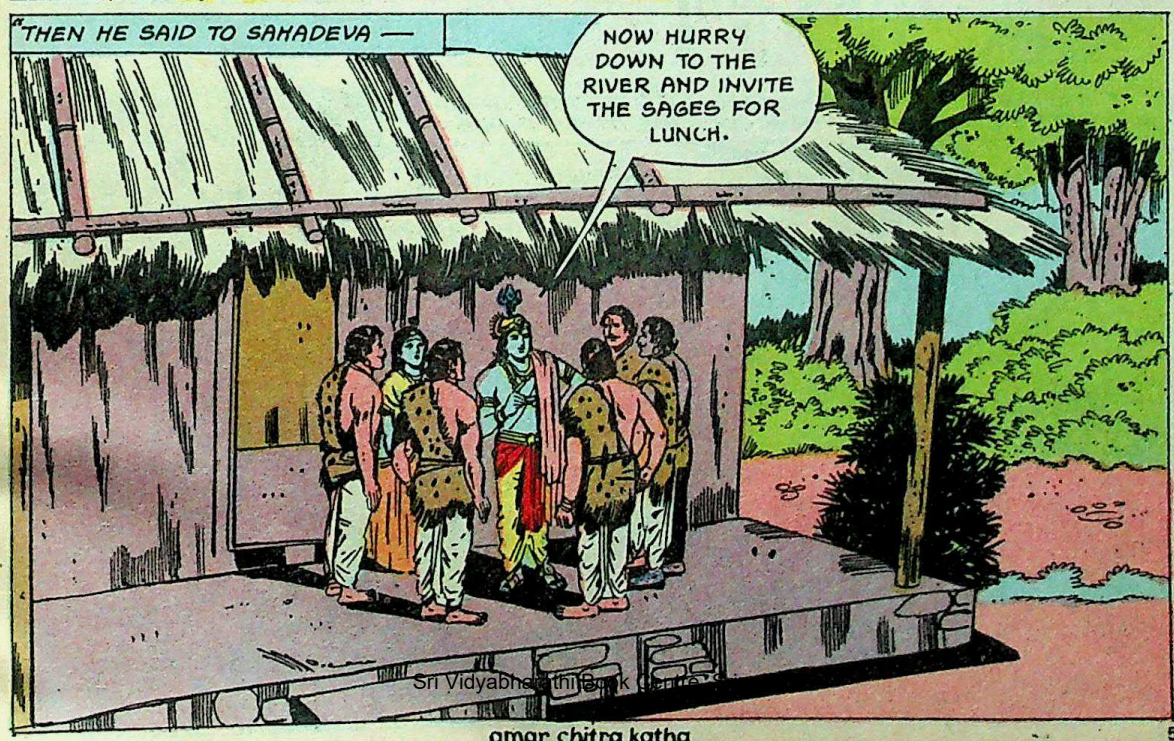

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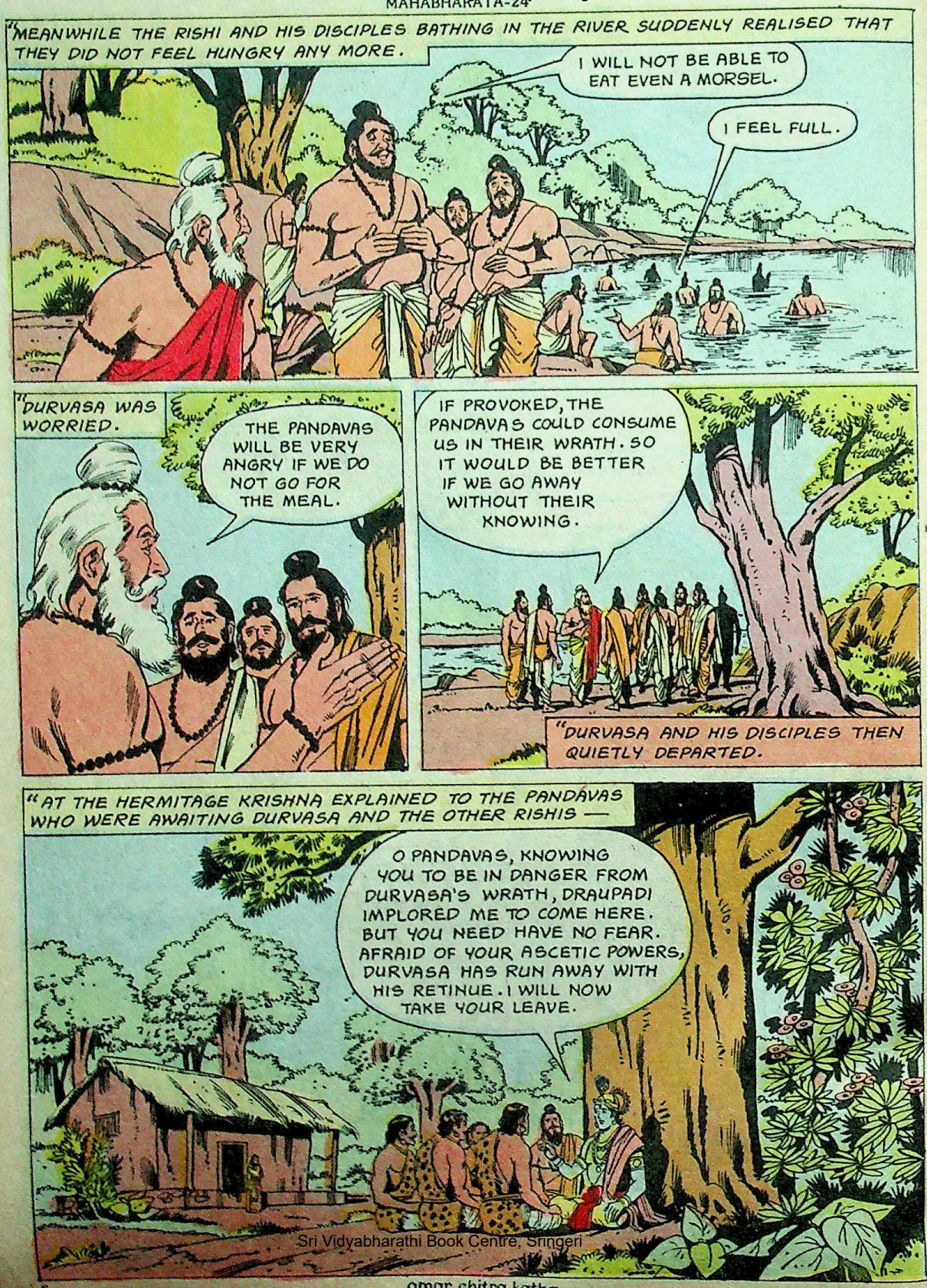

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"DRAUPADI RECEIVED JAYADRATHA WITH THE COURTESY DUE TO A KING.

O KING, ACCEPT THIS WATER TO WASH YOUR FEET. MY HUSBANDS WILL BE BACK SOON WITH GAME.

BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN, COME WITH ME AND BE MY QUEEN.

WHAT... WHAT DID YOU SAY?

LEAVE YOUR HUSBANDS. A WOMAN SHOULD FOLLOW HER LORD IN PROSPERITY AND LEAVE HIM IN ADVERSITY. NOW THAT YOUR HUSBANDS HAVE LOST THEIR KINGDOM, COME WITH ME.

"DRAUPADI SAID, HER FACE CONTORTED IN ANGER —

DO NOT SPEAK ANOTHER WORD. ARE YOU NOT ASHAMED TO SPEAK THUS?

YOU SHOULD BE PROTECTING ME AS WOULD A BROTHER. YOU ARE BORN IN A FAMILY OF VIRTUOUS MEN BUT YOU DO NOT OBSERVE DHARMA.

BY WHAT YOU TOLD ME YOU HAVE INCURRED THE WRATH OF THE FIERY PANDAVAS, WHICH IS AS GOOD AS AN INVITATION TO DEATH.

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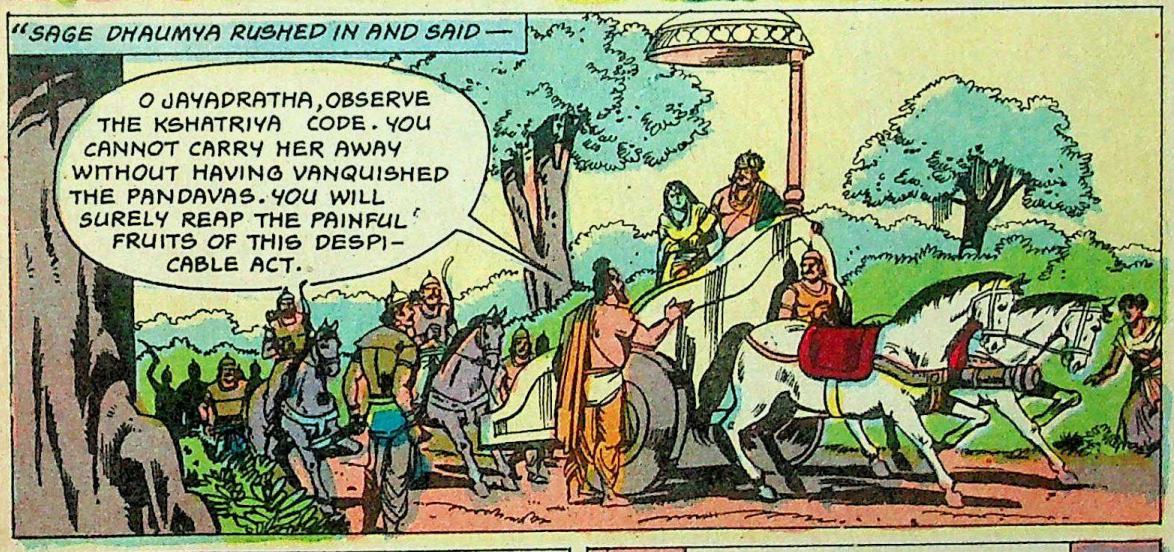

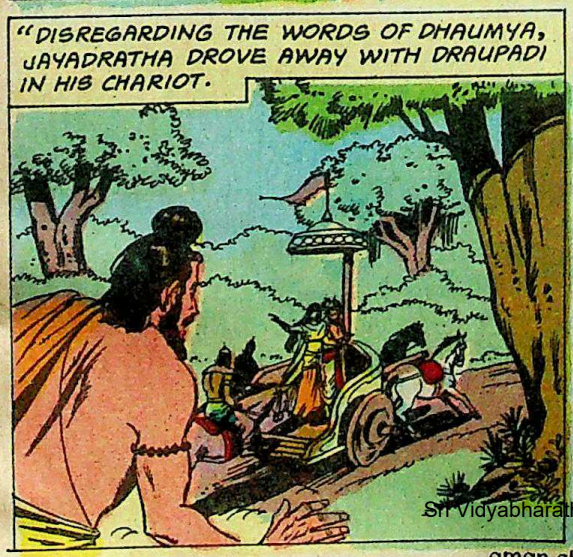

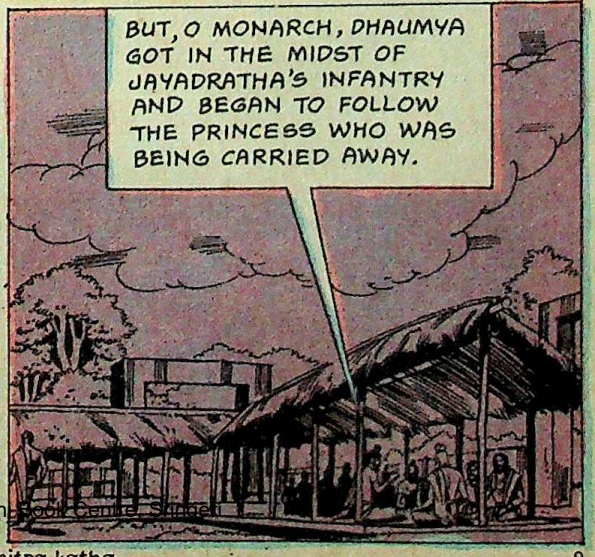

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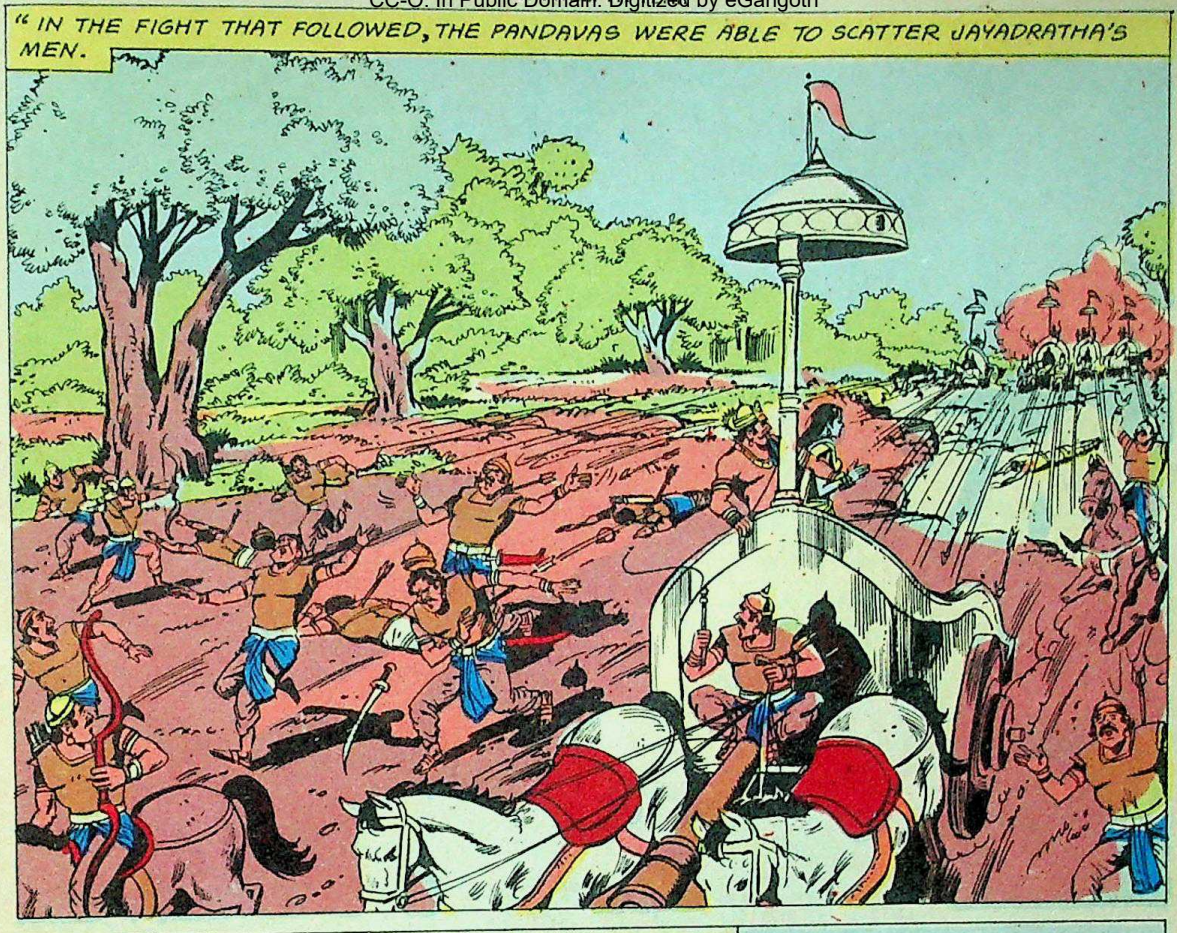

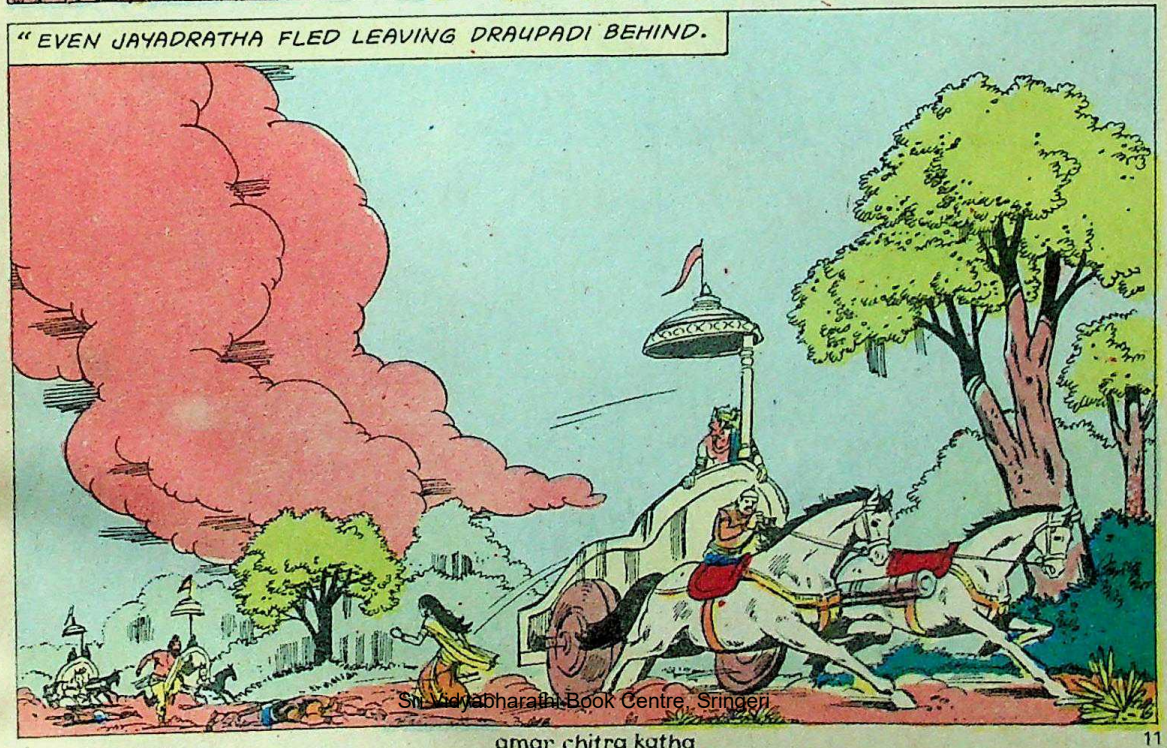

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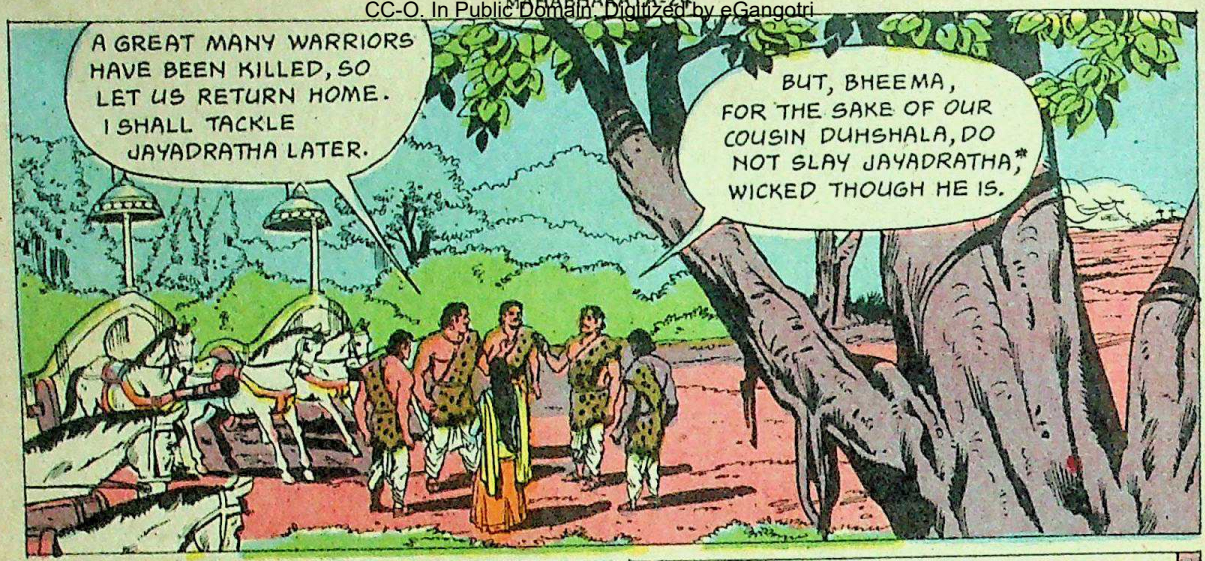

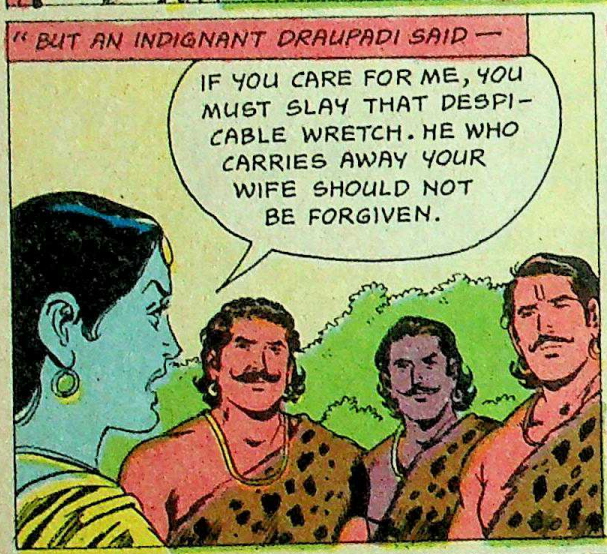

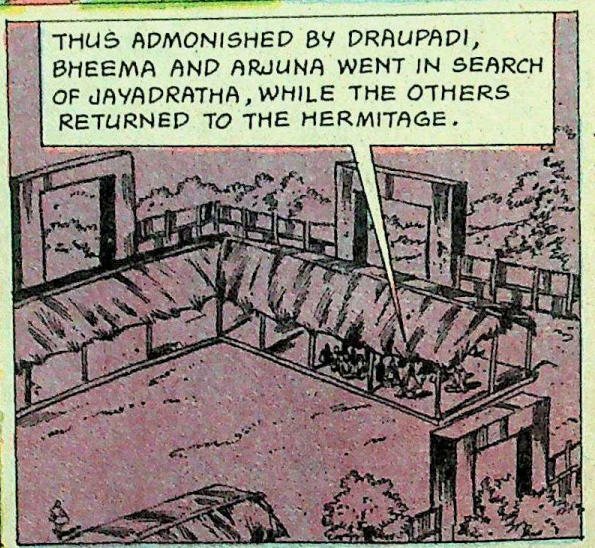

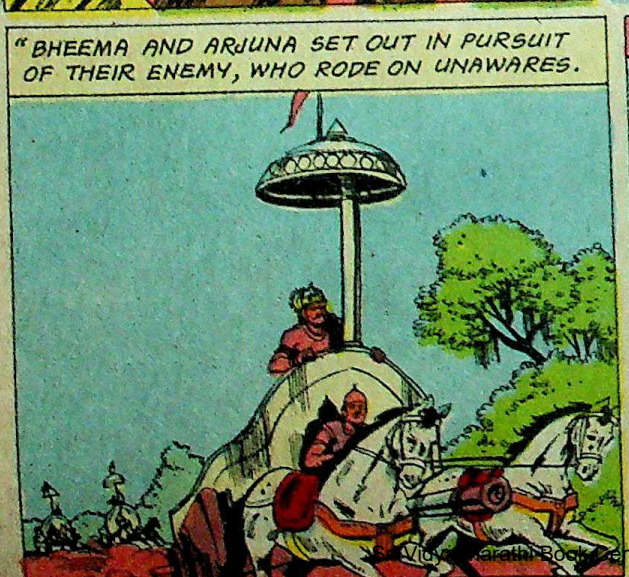

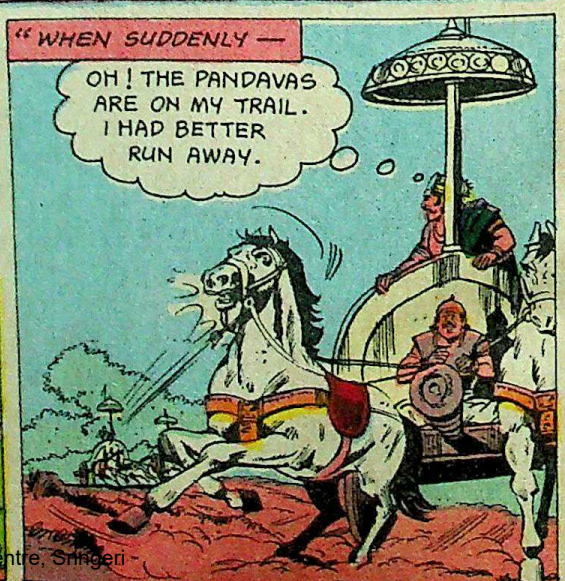

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* JAYADRATHA WAS THE HUSBAND OF DUHSHALA, DURYODHANA'S SISTER.

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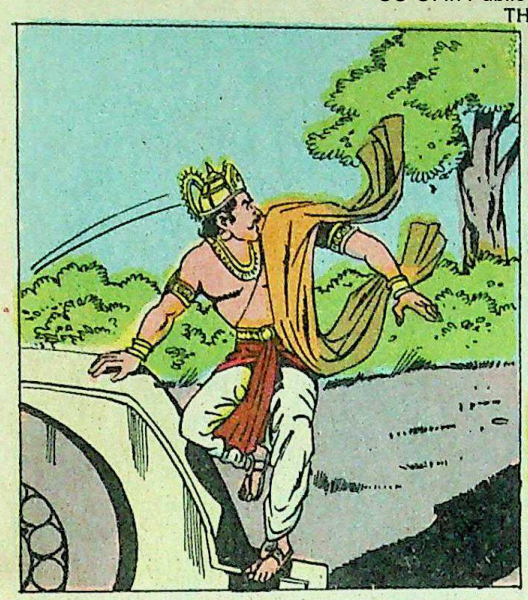
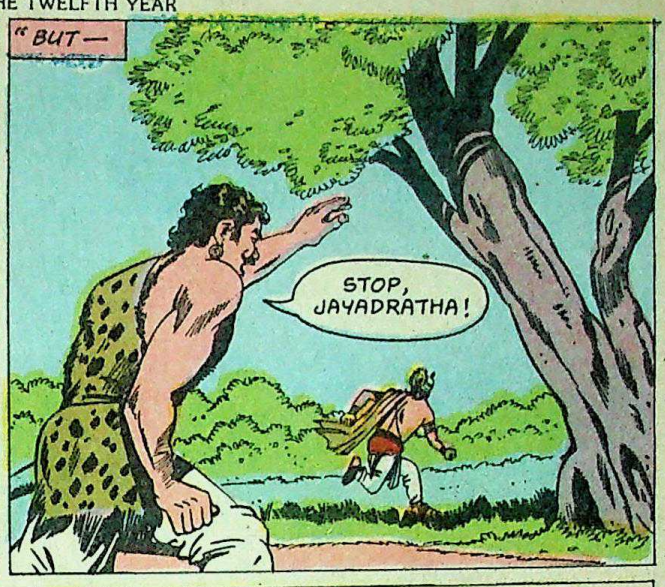
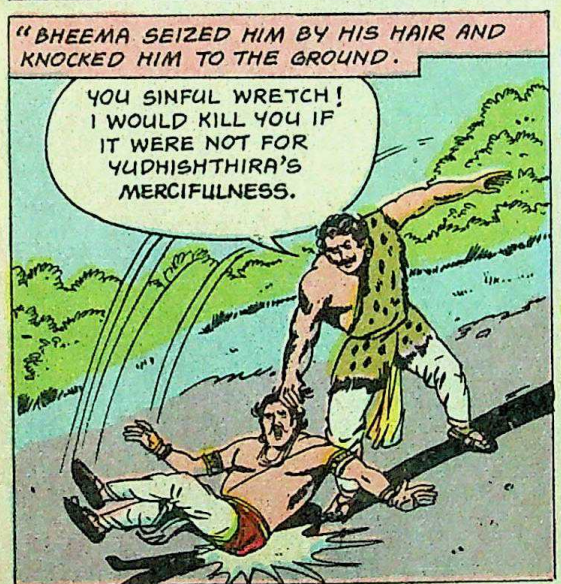
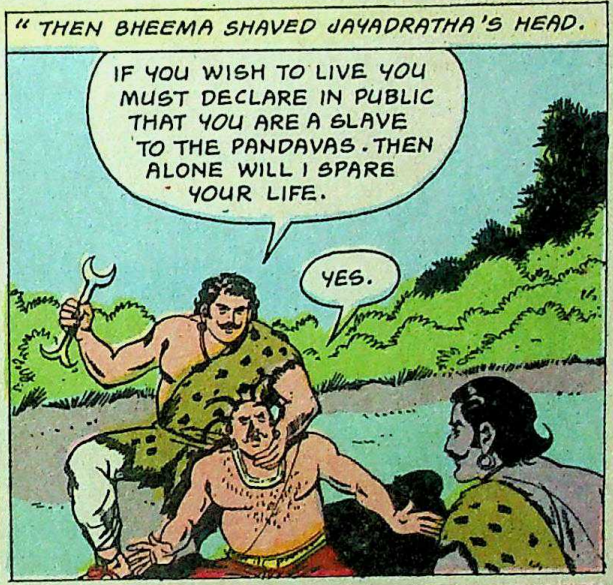




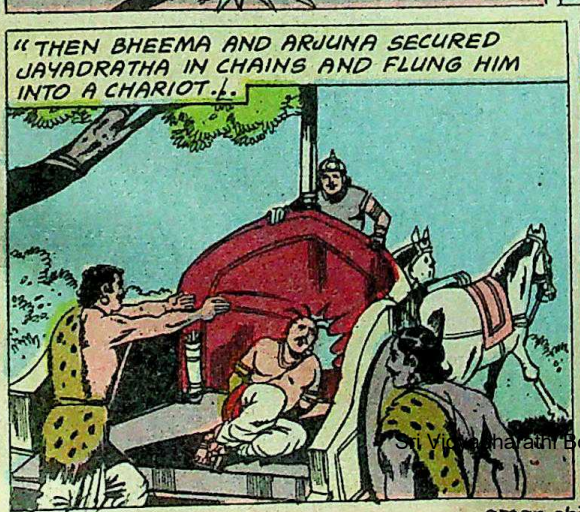
"BHEEMA SEIZED HIM BY HIS HAIR AND KNOCKED HIM TO THE GROUND.



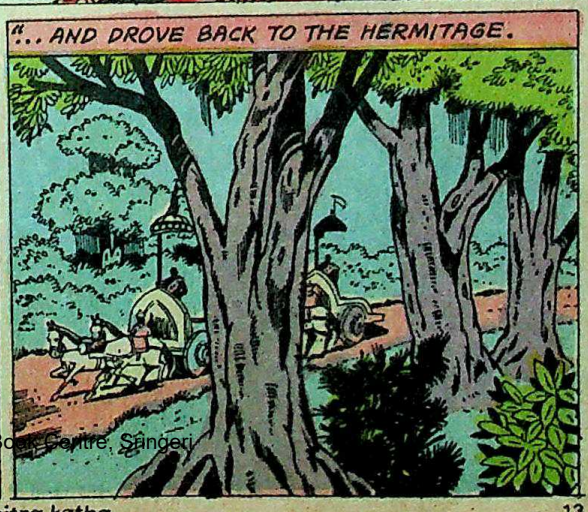
"THEN BHEEMA SHAVED JAYADRATHA'S HEAD.



"THEN BHEEMA AND ARJUNA SECURED JAYADRATHA IN CHAINS AND FLUNG HIM INTO A CHARIOT.



"... AND DROVE BACK TO THE HERMITAGE.



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"THROWING JAYADRATHA AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S FEET, BHEEMA SAID—

YUDHISHTHIRA, TELL DRAUPADI THAT THIS MAN HAS BECOME A SLAVE OF THE PANDAVAS.

BHEEMA, IF YOU HAVE ANY REGARD FOR ME SET HIM FREE.

"DRAUPADI TOO SAID —

LET HIM OFF! HE HAS BECOME OUR SLAVE AND YOU HAVE DISFIGURED HIM. THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME.

"JAYADRATHA WAS UNCHAINED. AS HE PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE YUDHISHTHIRA —

GO! YOU ARE A FREE MAN. BUT NEVER SET YOUR HEART ON EVIL DEEDS AGAIN.

OVERPOWERED BY SHAME, JAYADRATHA SOUGHT THE PROTECTION OF LORD SHIVA. HE OBSERVED SEVERE PENANCE ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA.

"FINALLY ONE DAY SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE JAYADRATHA.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK FOR A BOON.

O LORD, GRANT THAT I MAY BE ABLE TO DEFEAT ALL FIVE PANDAVAS IN BATTLE.

THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE. THE PANDAVAS ARE UNCONQUERABLE IN BATTLE.

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"ONE DAY, WHILE THE PANDAVAS WERE DWELLING IN THE FOREST, A BRAHMANA APPROACHED YUDHISHTHIRA FOR HELP.

O KING! A DEER HAS ROMPED AWAY WITH MY SHAMI STICKS*. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO RETRIEVE THEM FOR ME.

I HAD HUNG THE BUNDLE OF STICKS FROM A TREE. A DEER CAME AND RUBBED AGAINST THE TREE, WHERE UPON...

...THE STICKS GOT ENTANGLED IN HIS ANTLERS AND HE FLED.

I CHASED HIM BUT HE WAS TOO SWIFT FOR ME. MAKE HASTE, OR ELSE, I SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE YAJNA.

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* THE SHAMI STICKS WHEN RUBBED AGAINST EACH OTHER SET OFF SPARKS, WHICH LIGHT THE SACRIFICIAL FIRES.

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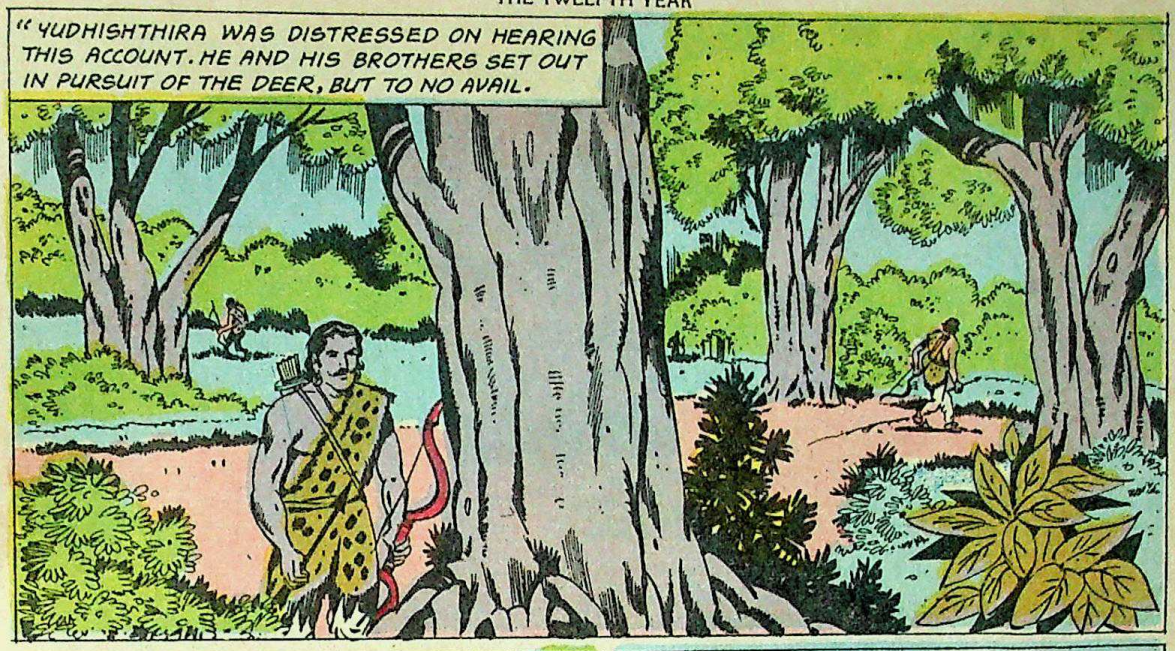

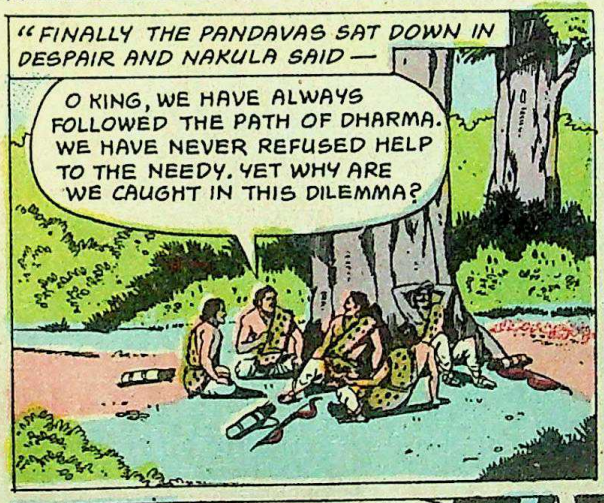

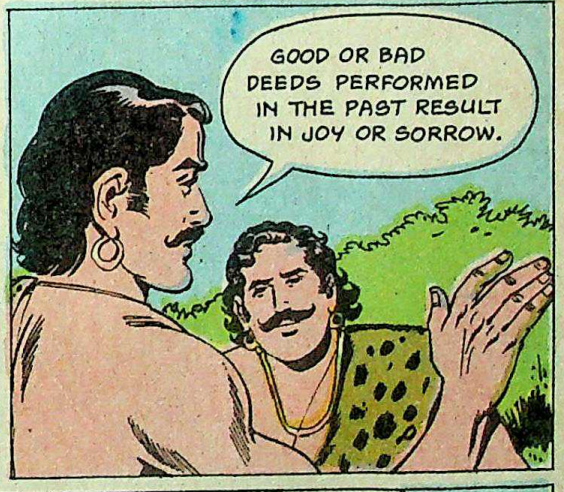

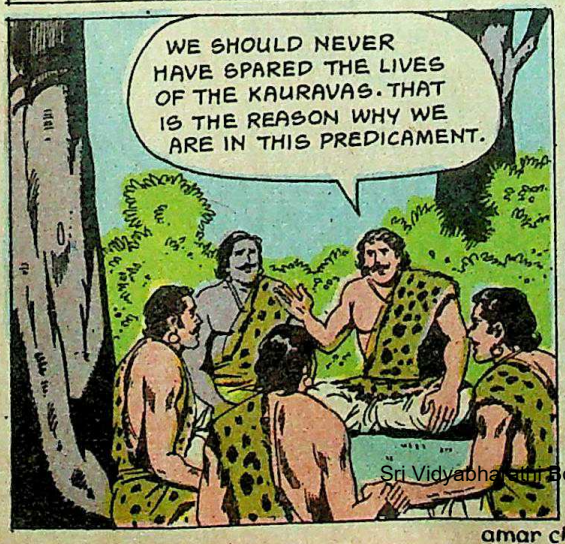

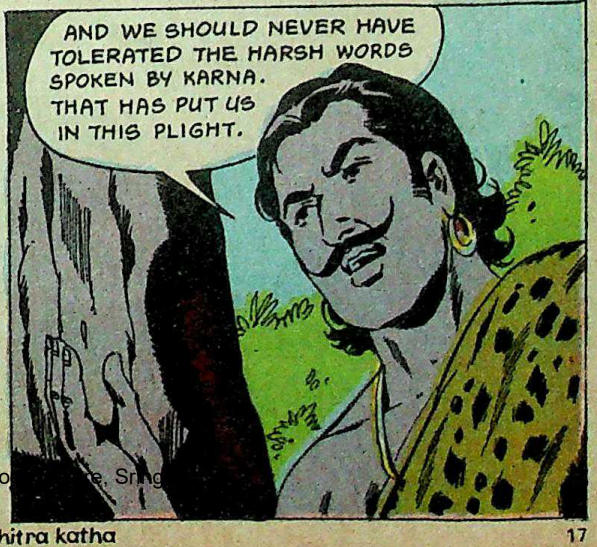

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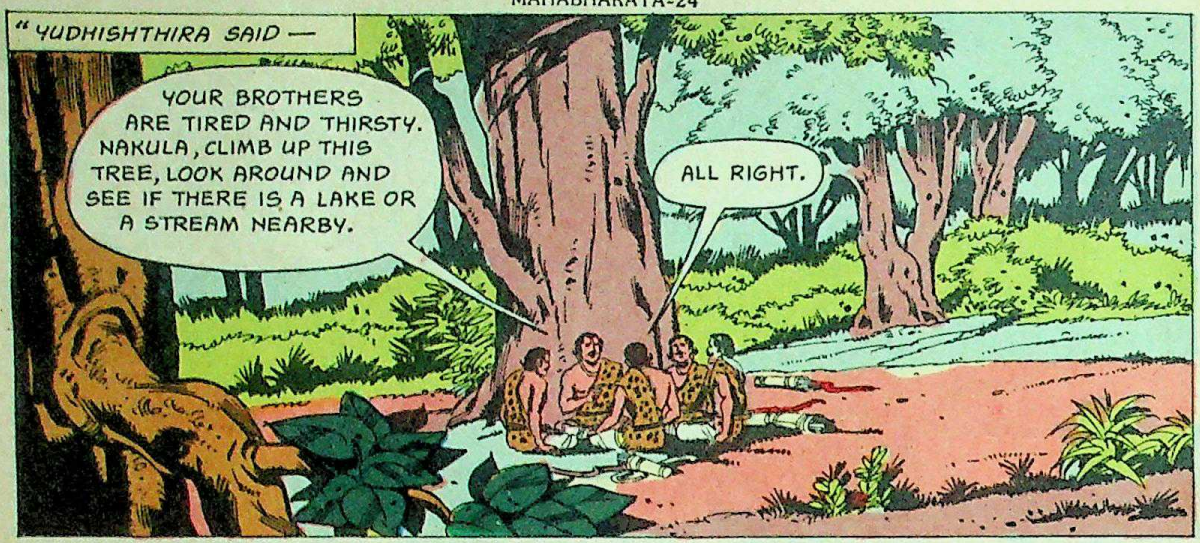

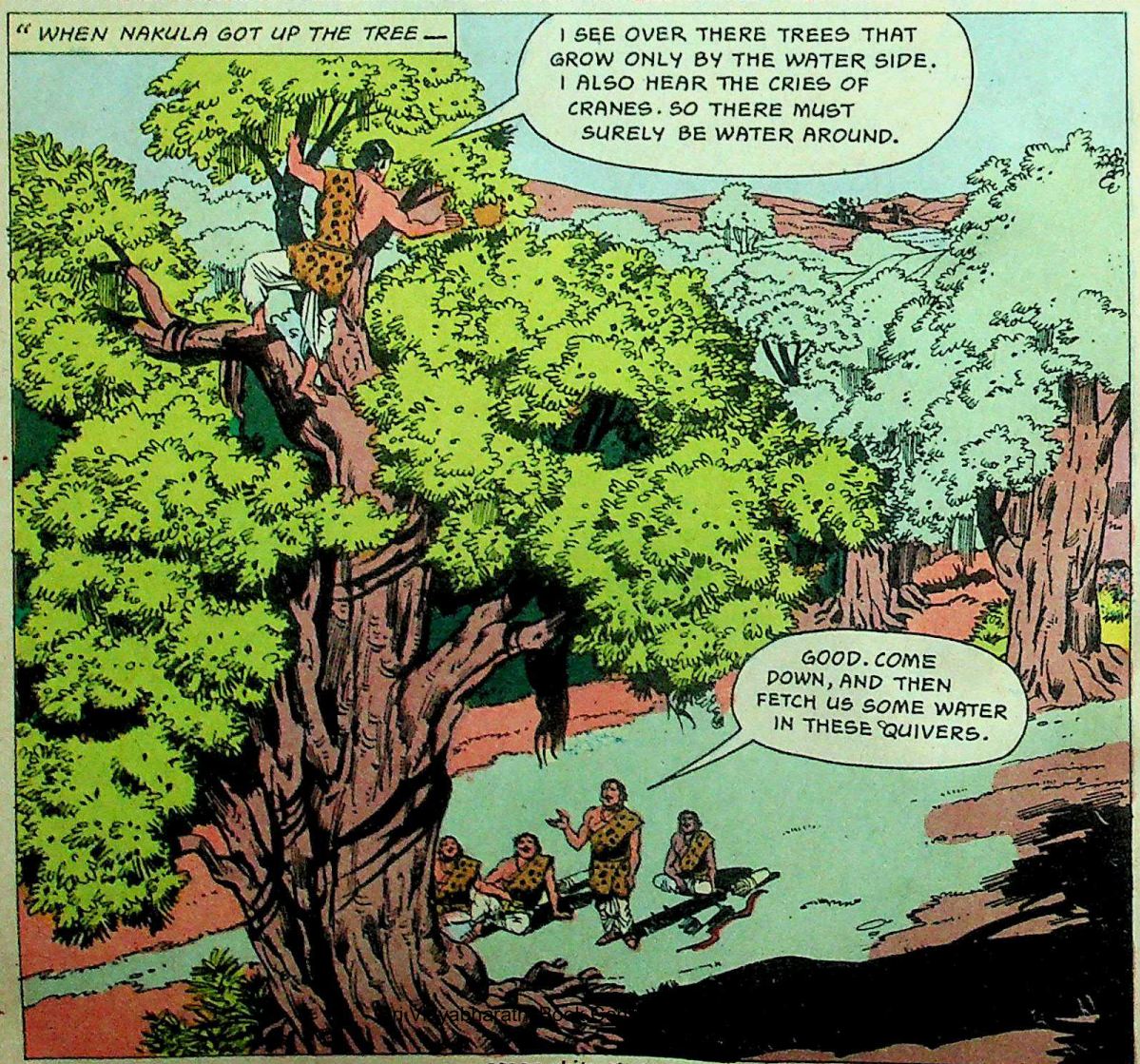

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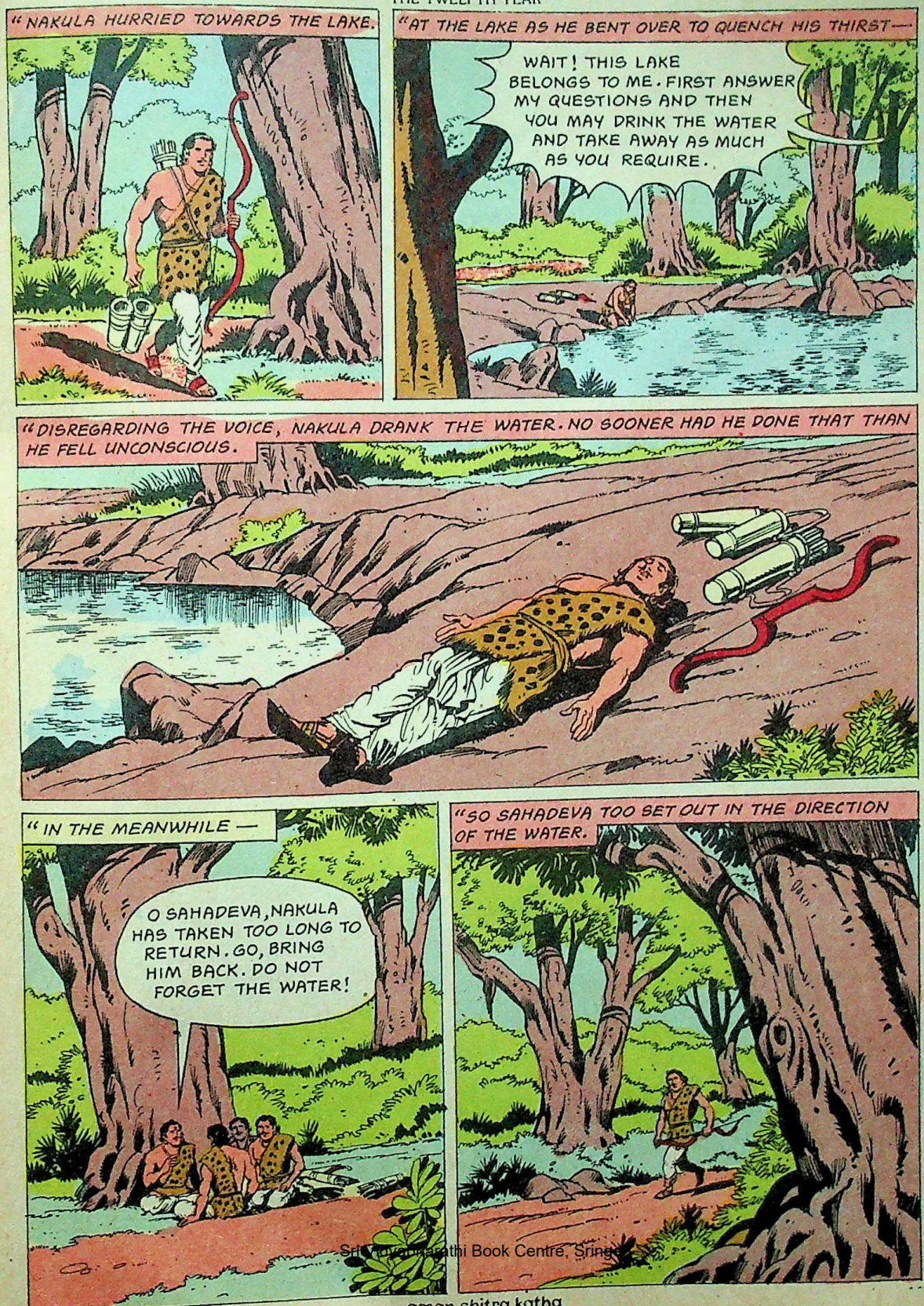

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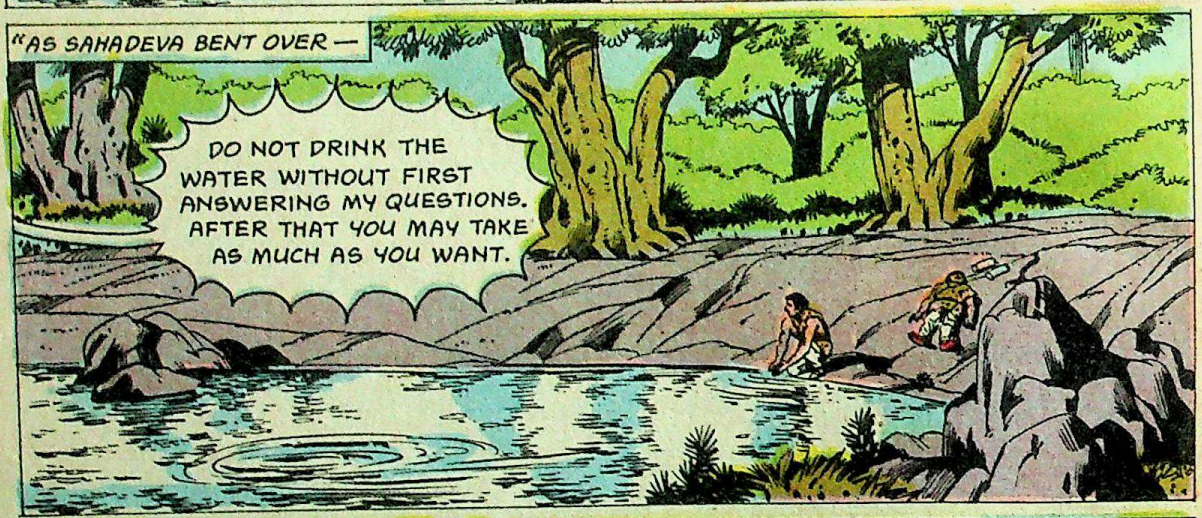

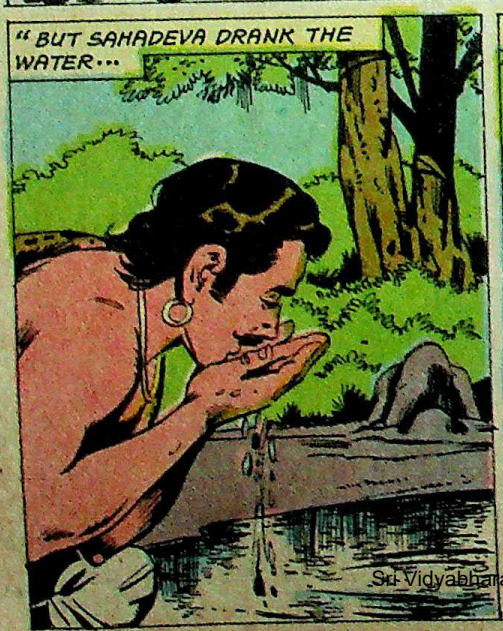

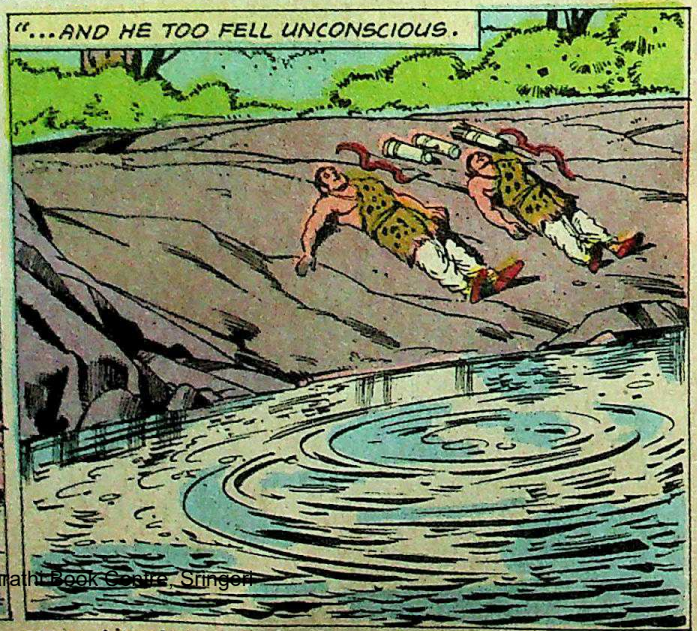

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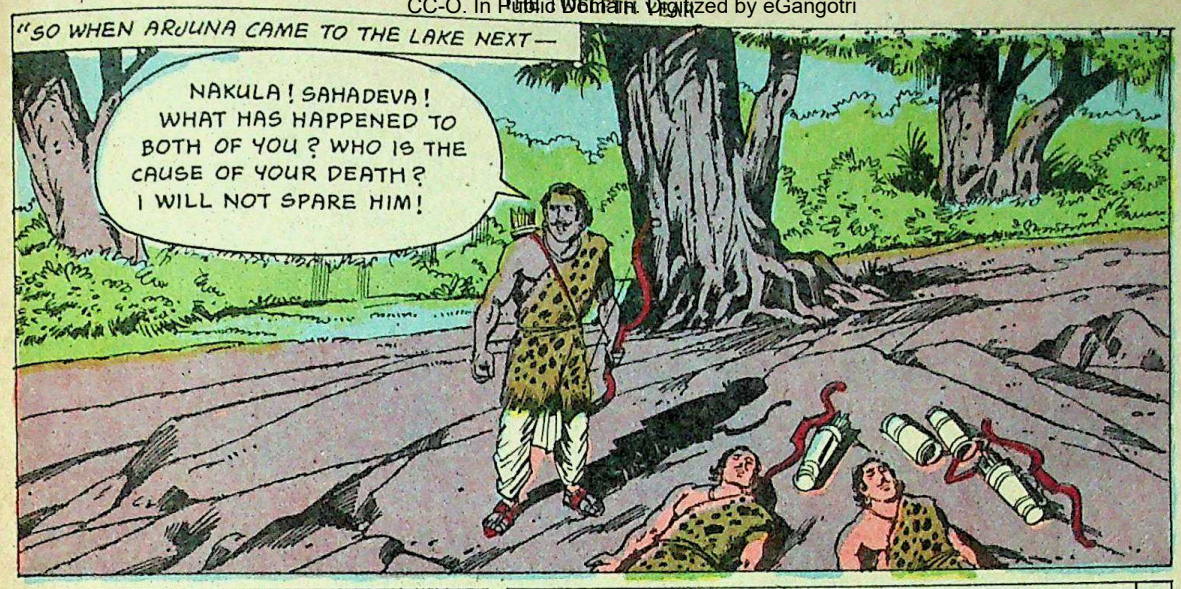

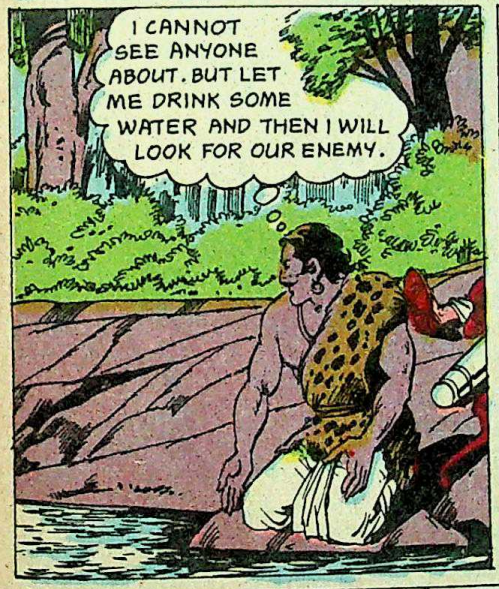

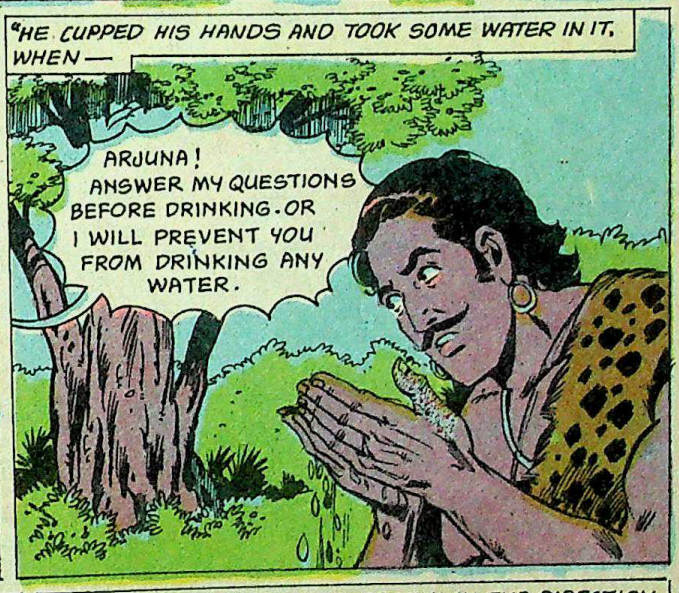

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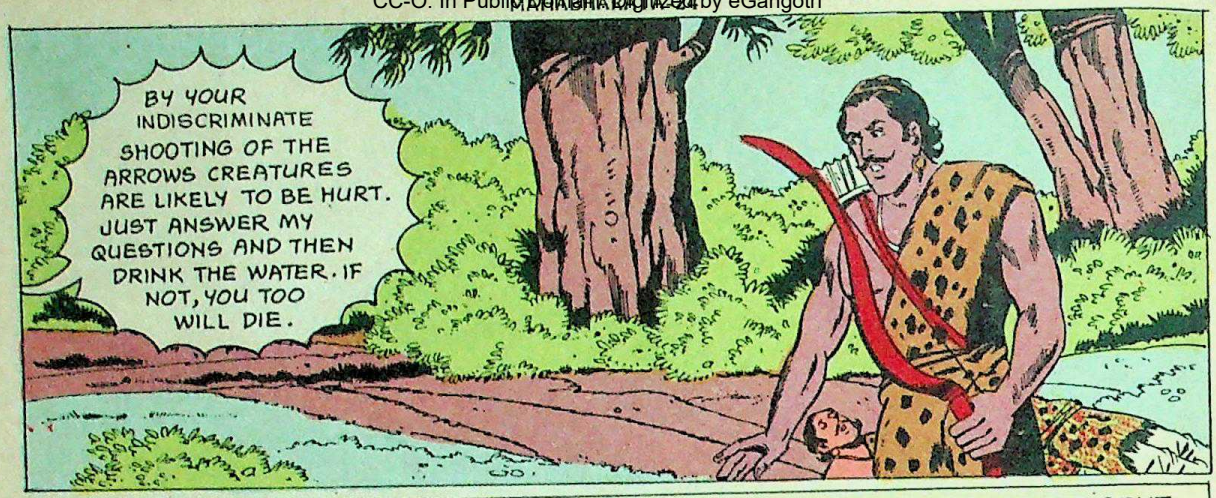

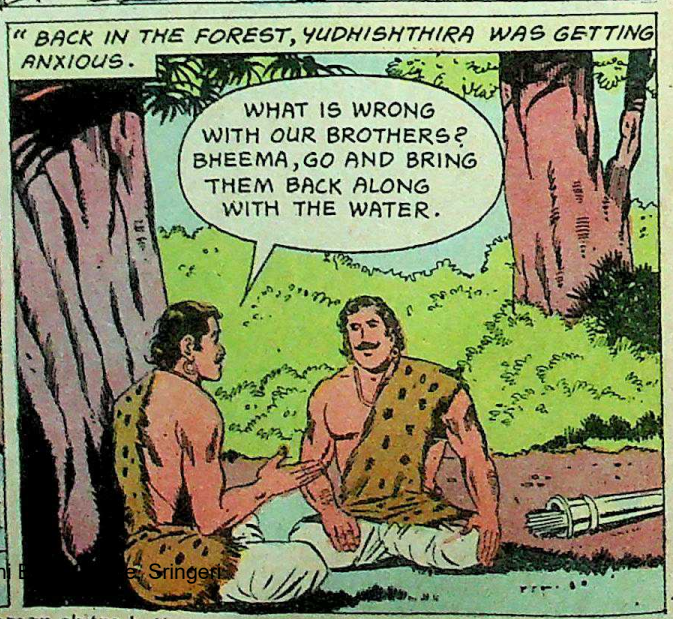

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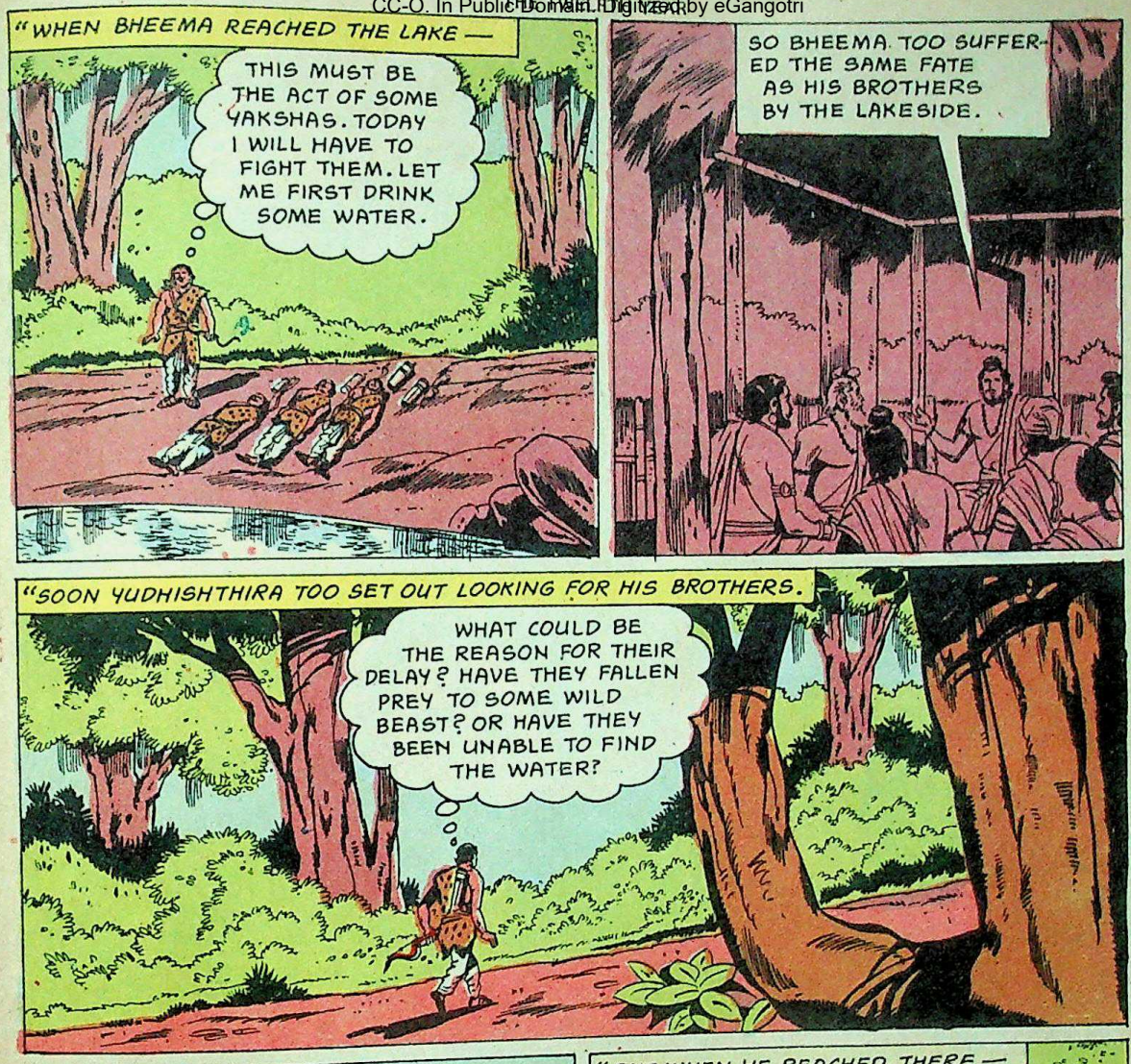

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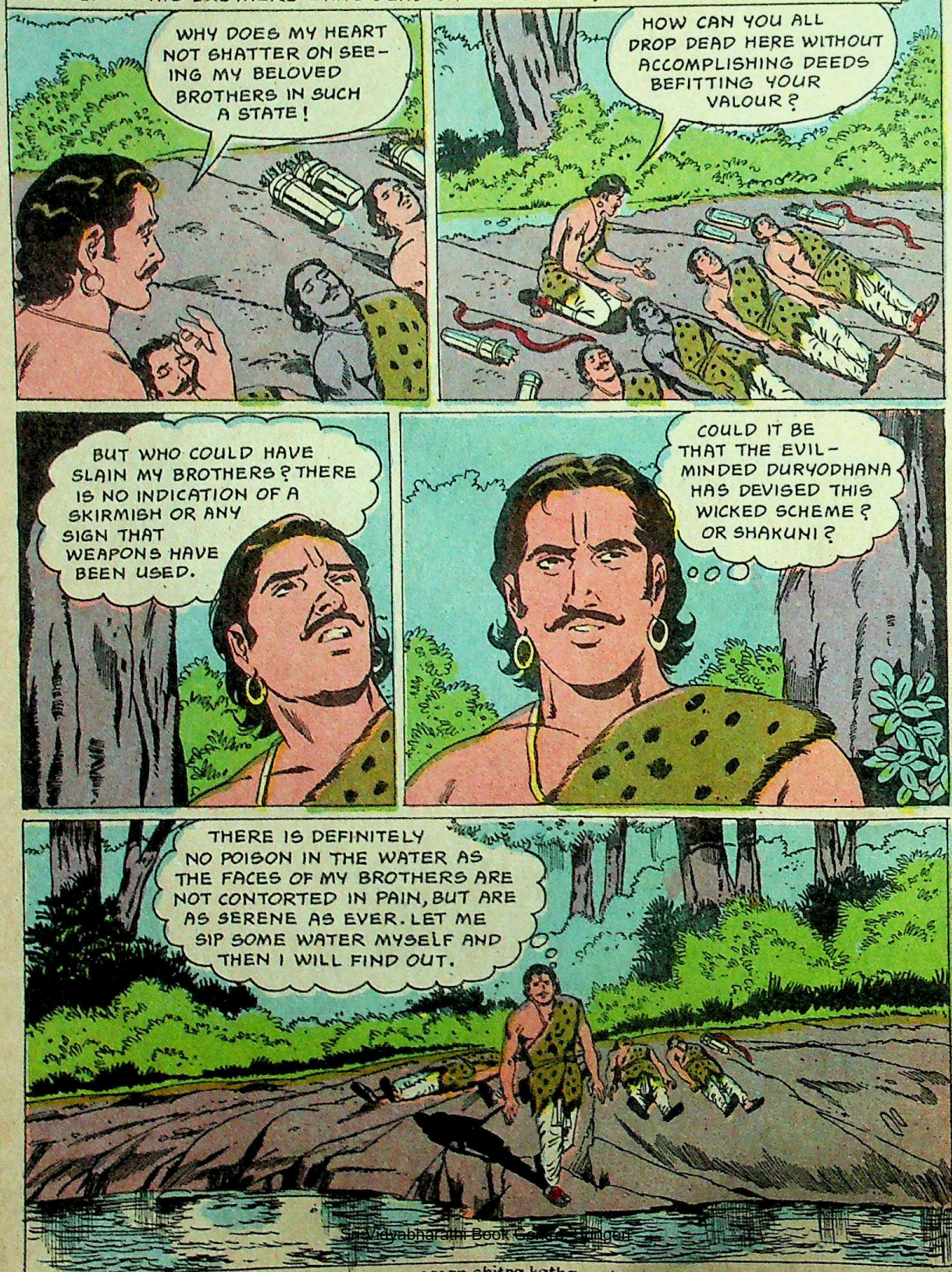

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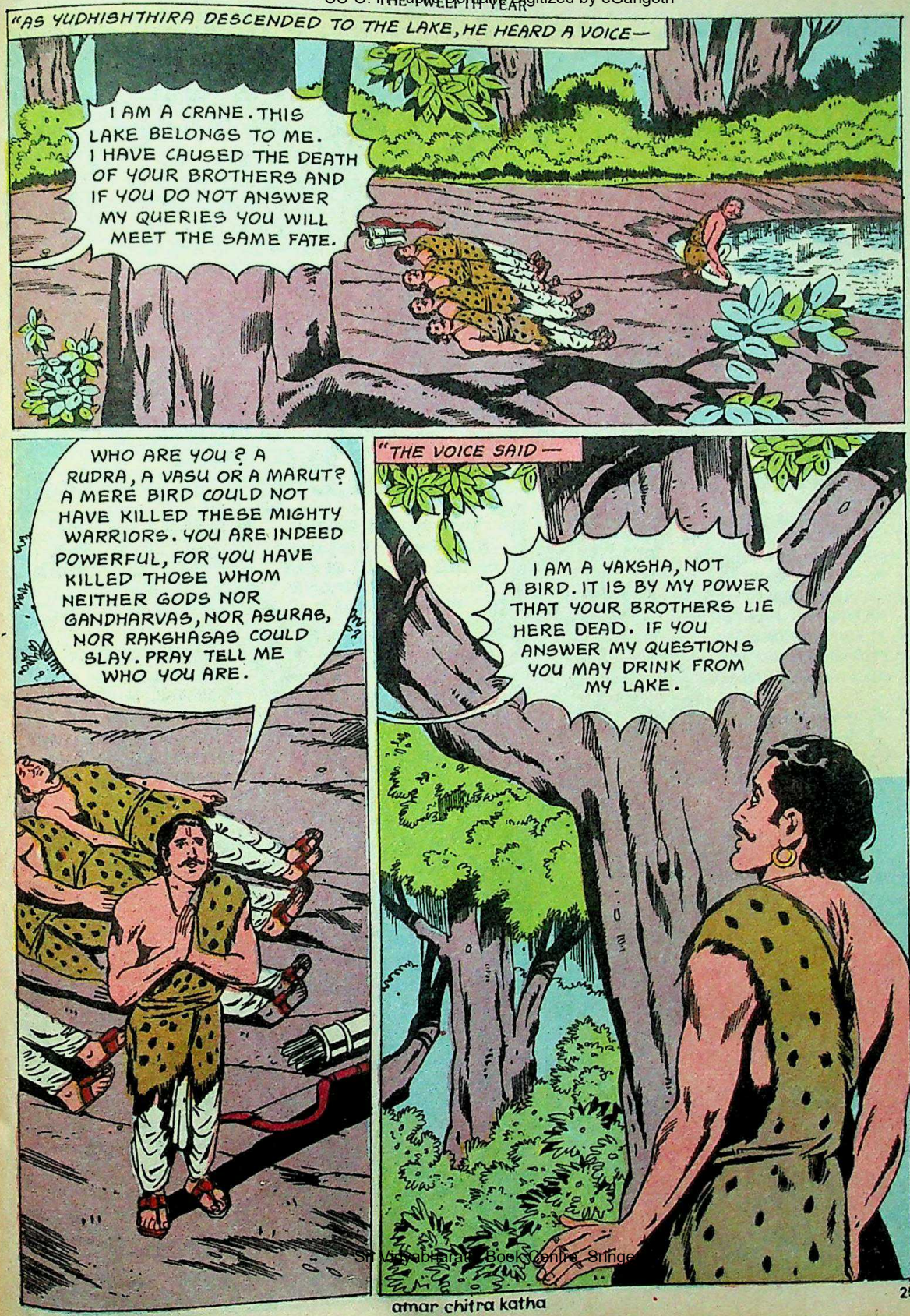

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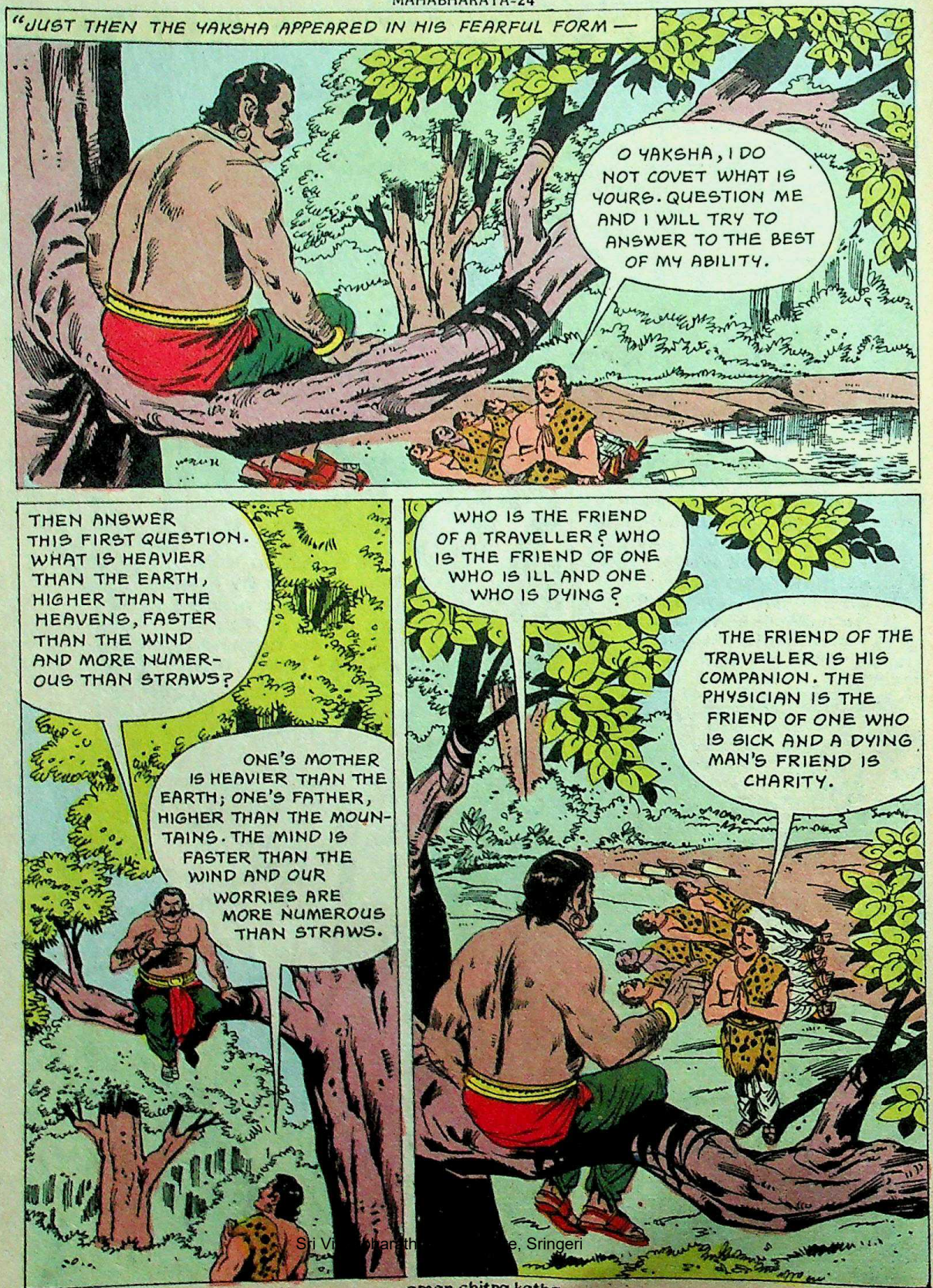

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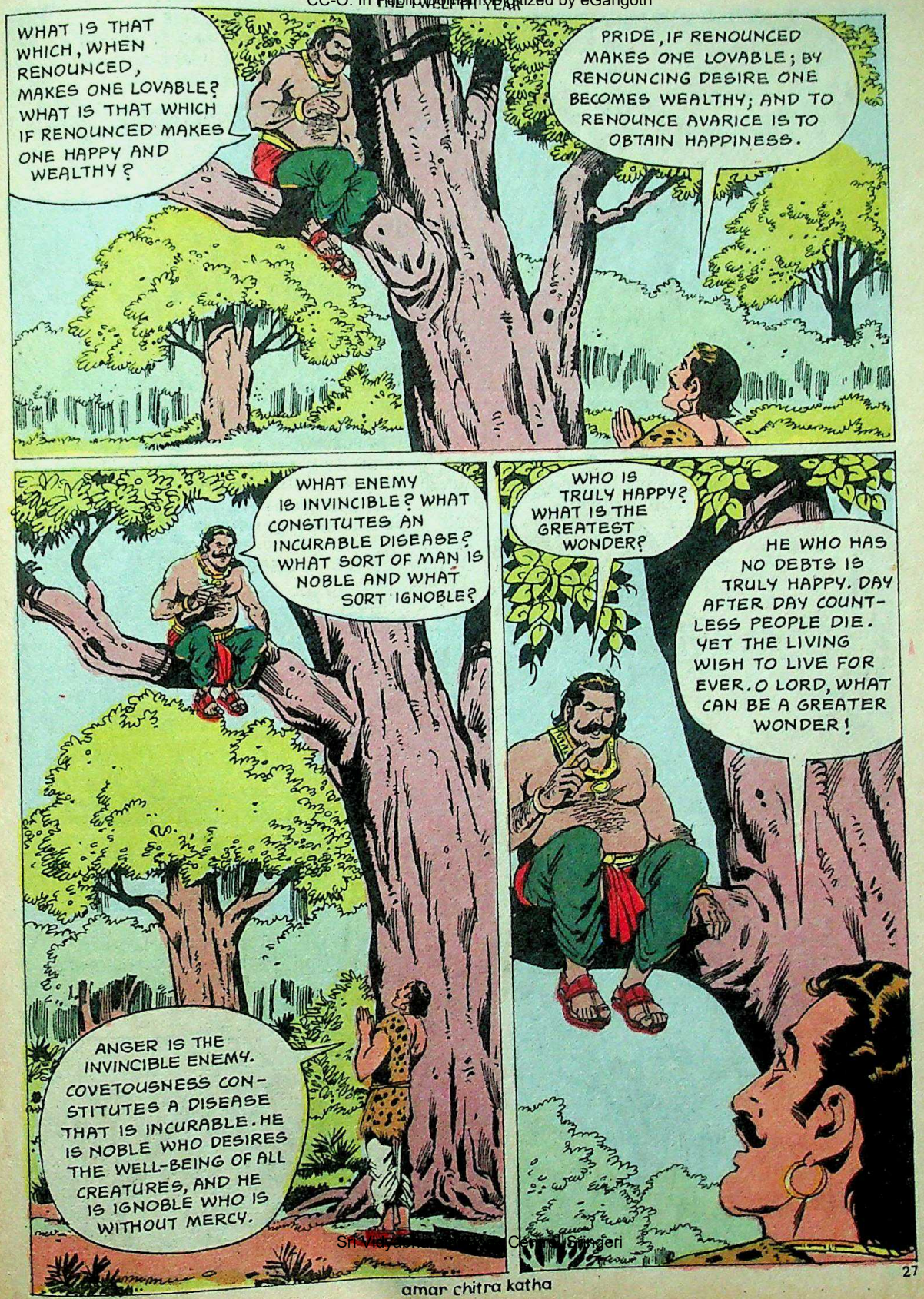

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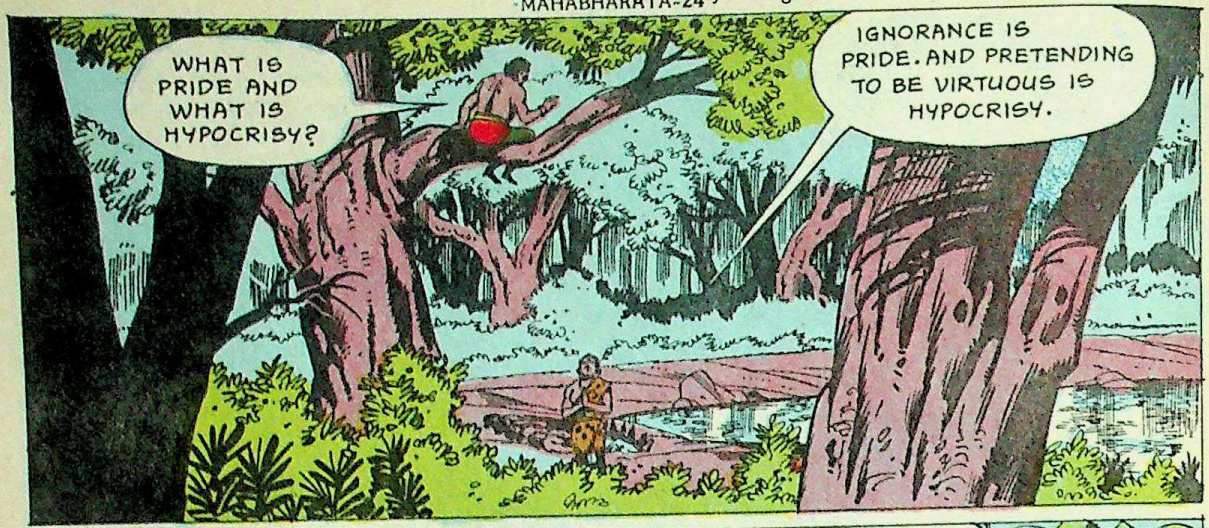

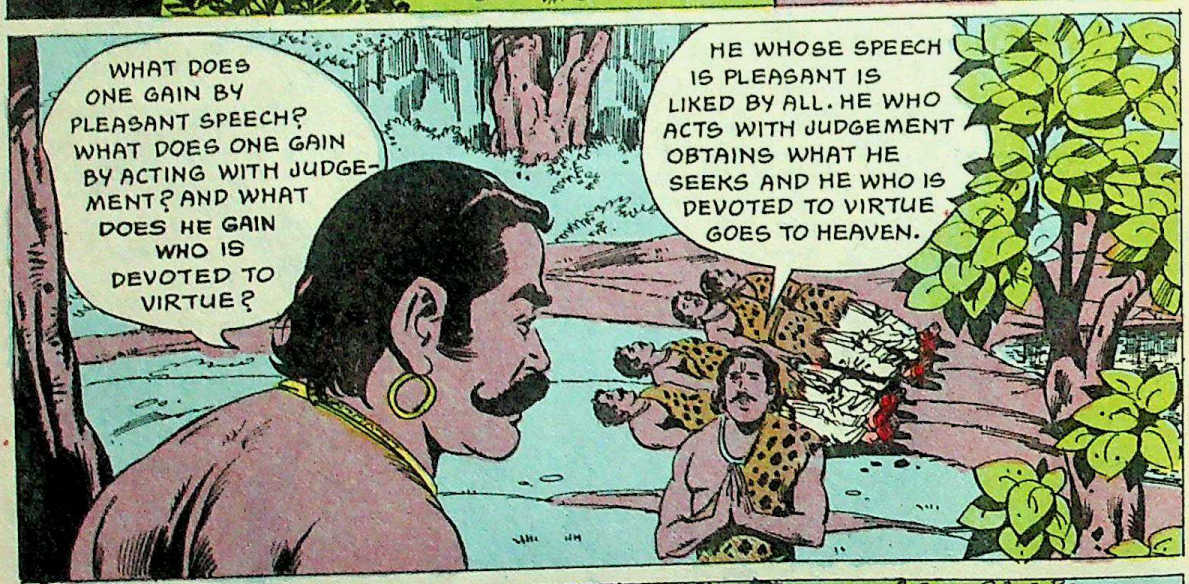

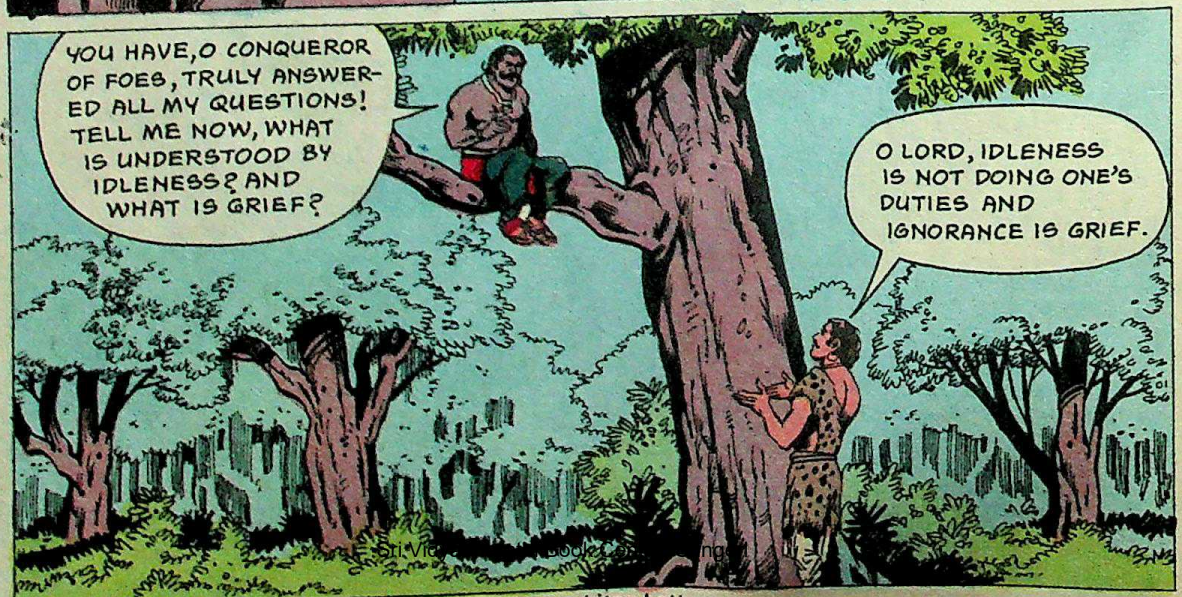

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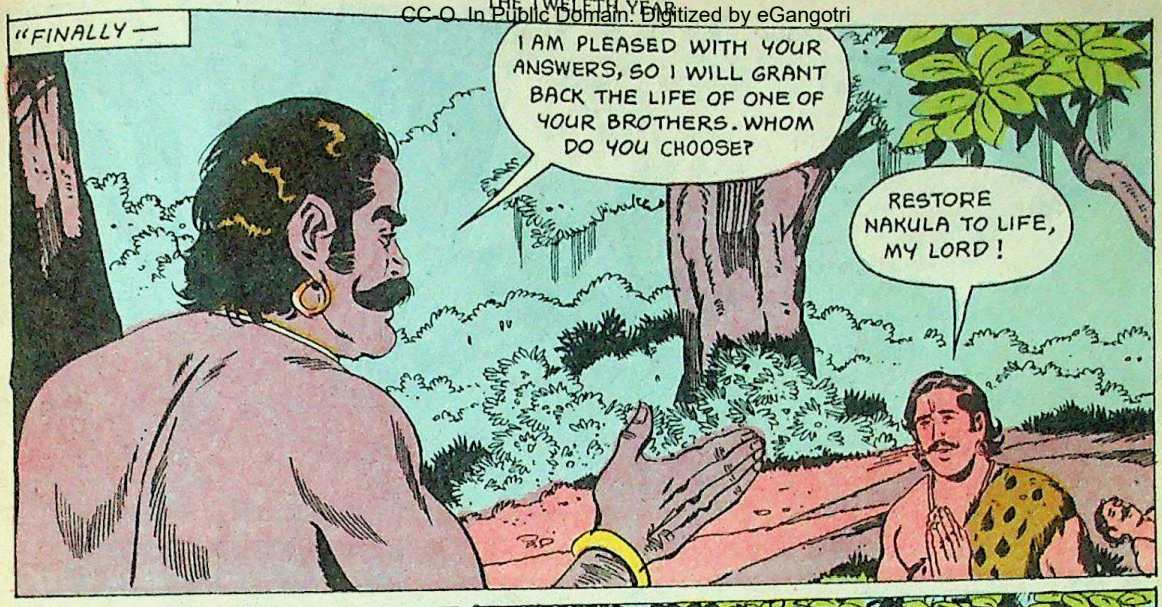

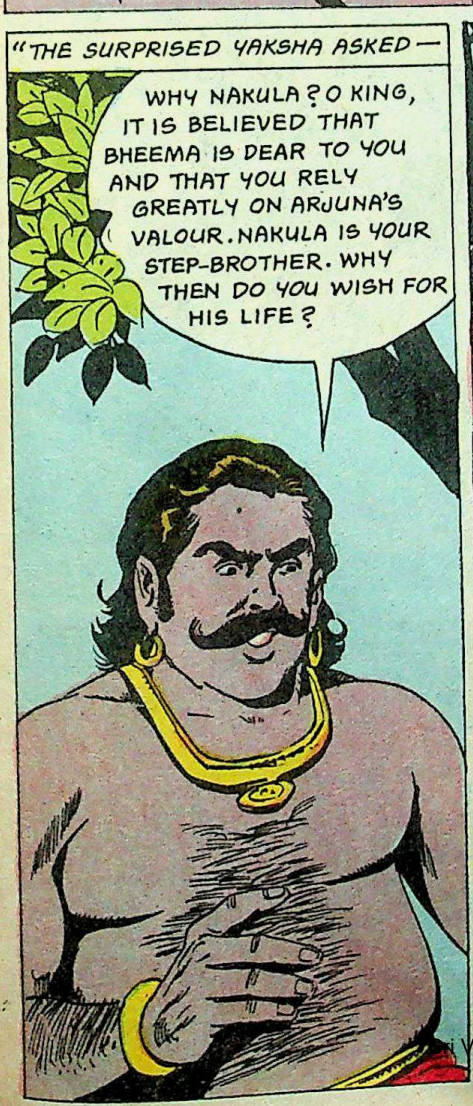

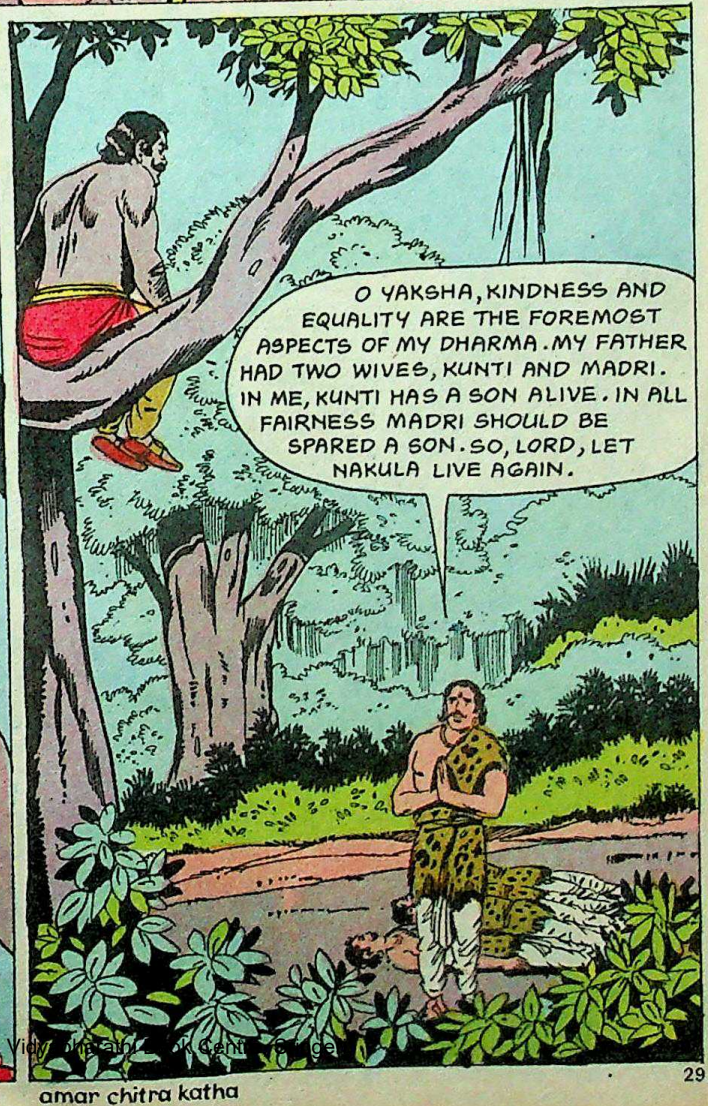

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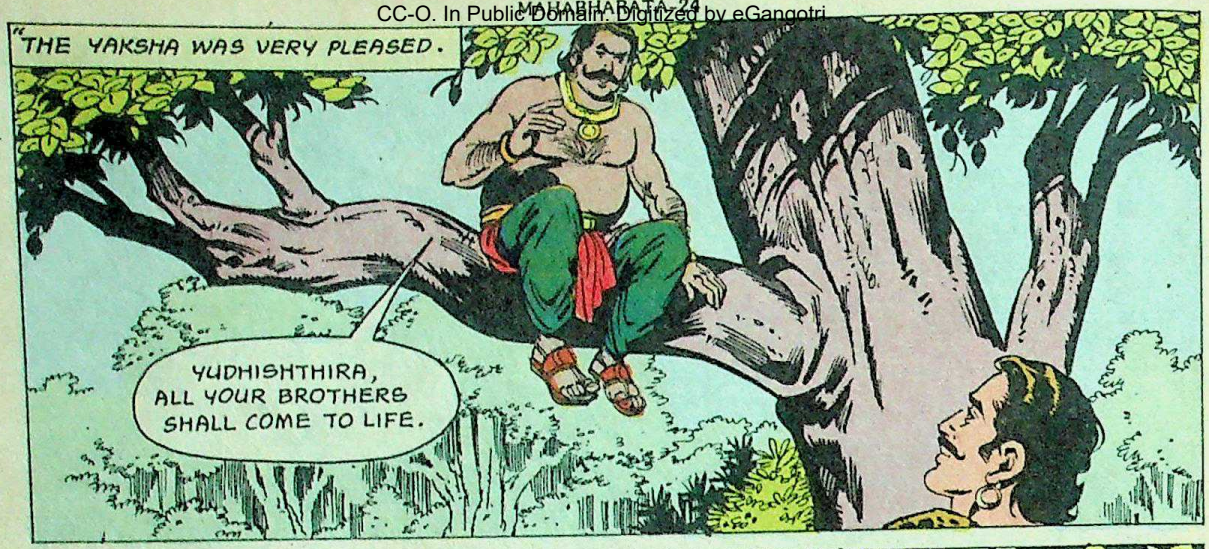

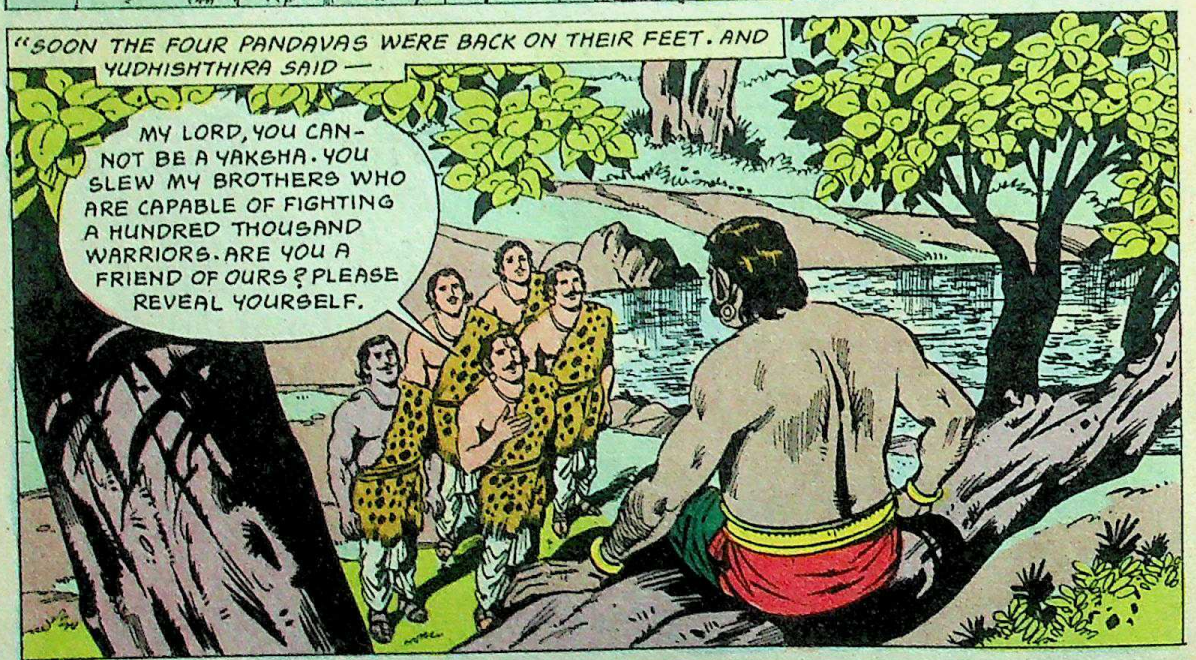

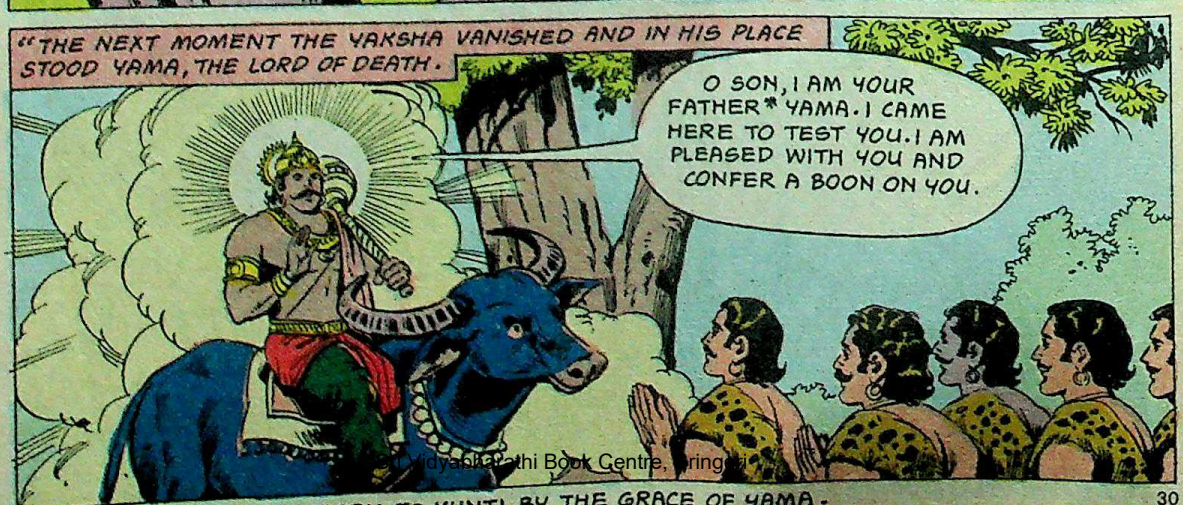

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* YUDHISHTHIRA WAS BORN TO KUNTI BY THE GRACE OF YAMA.

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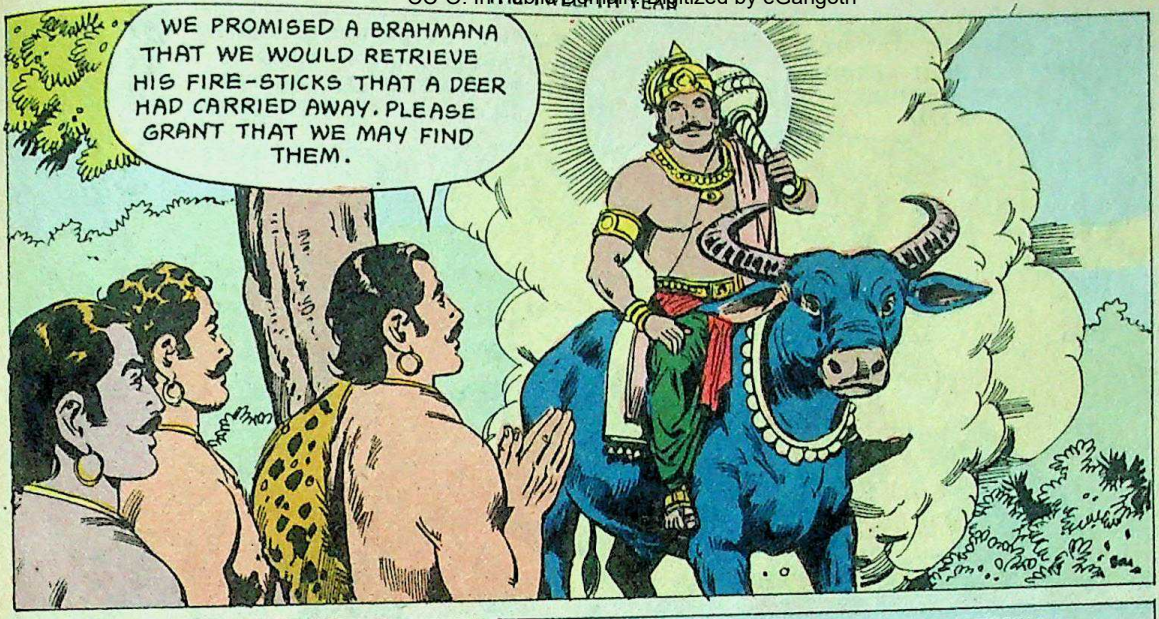

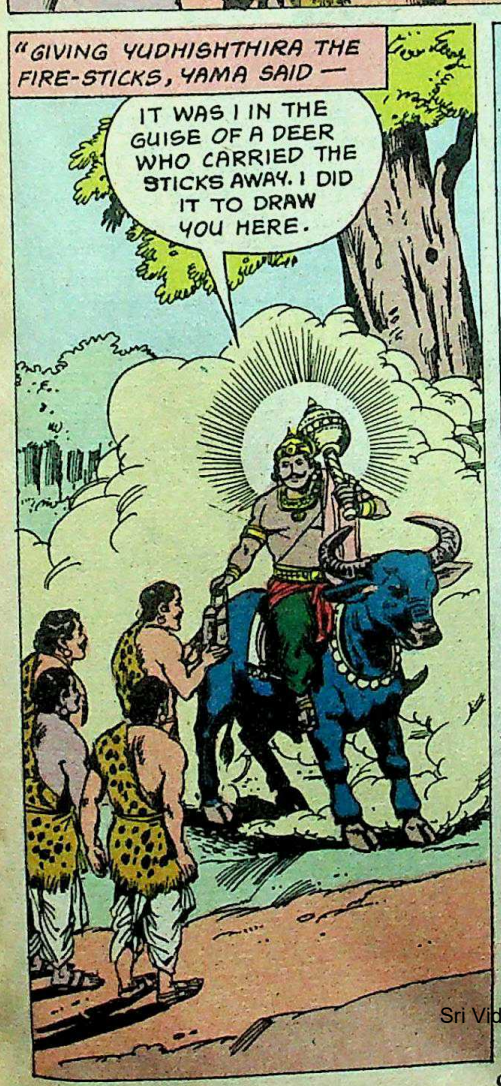

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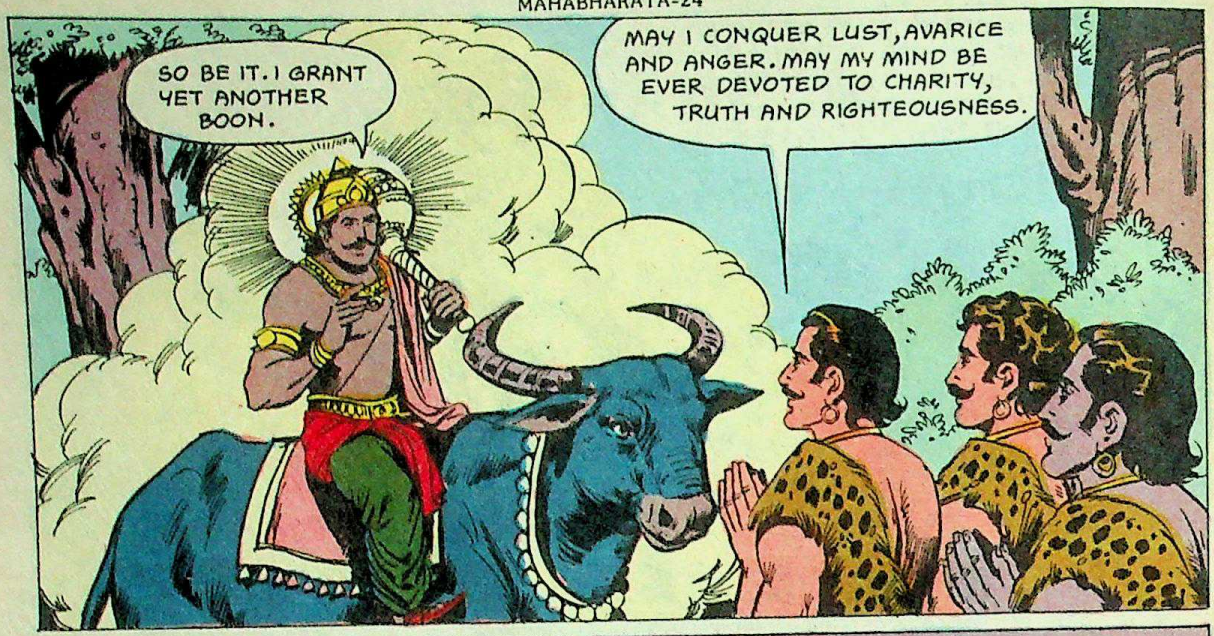

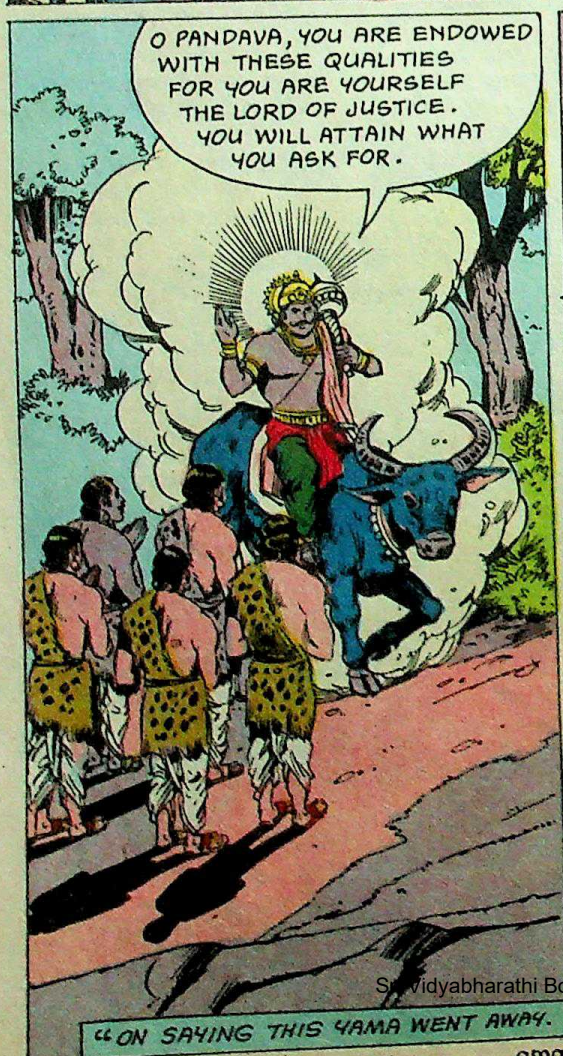

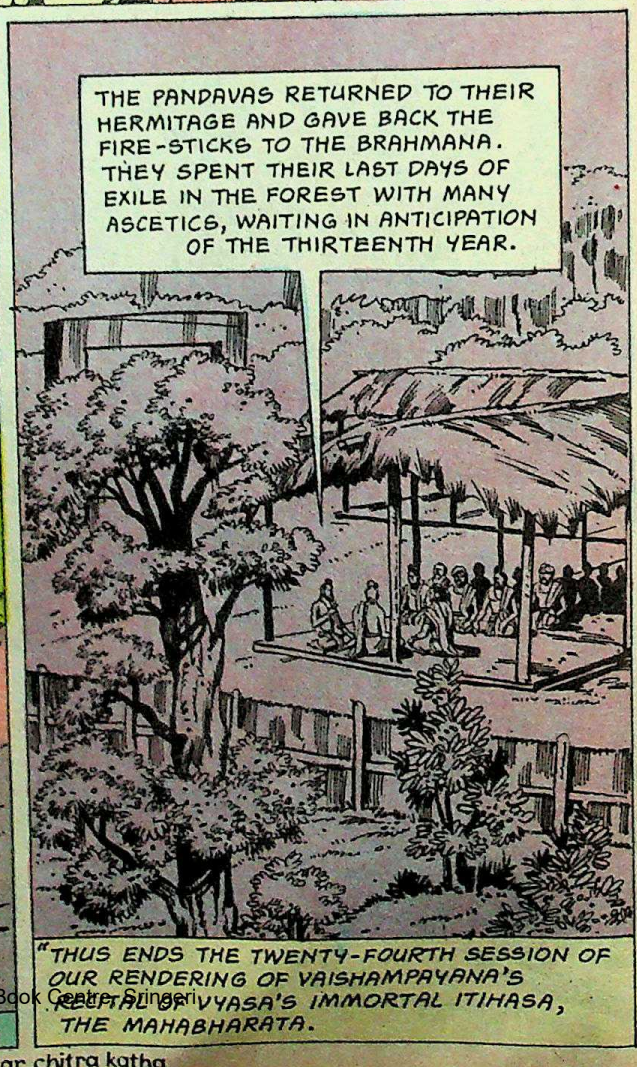

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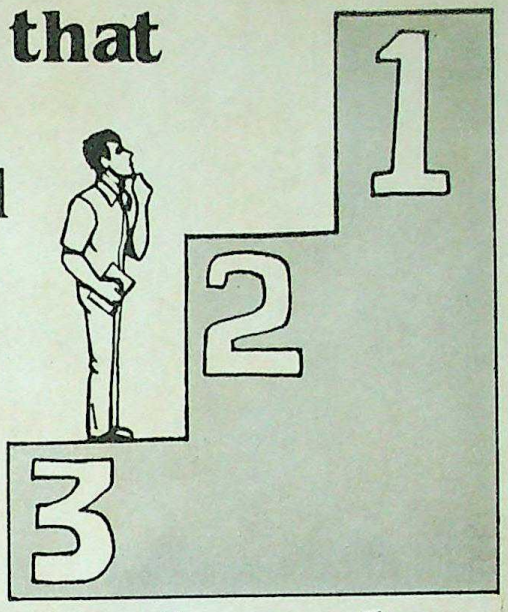

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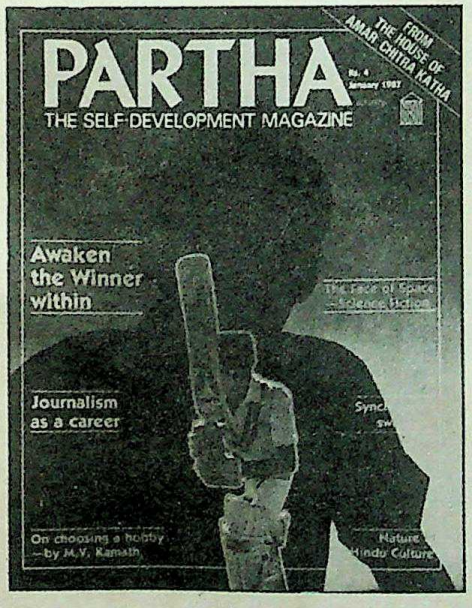

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